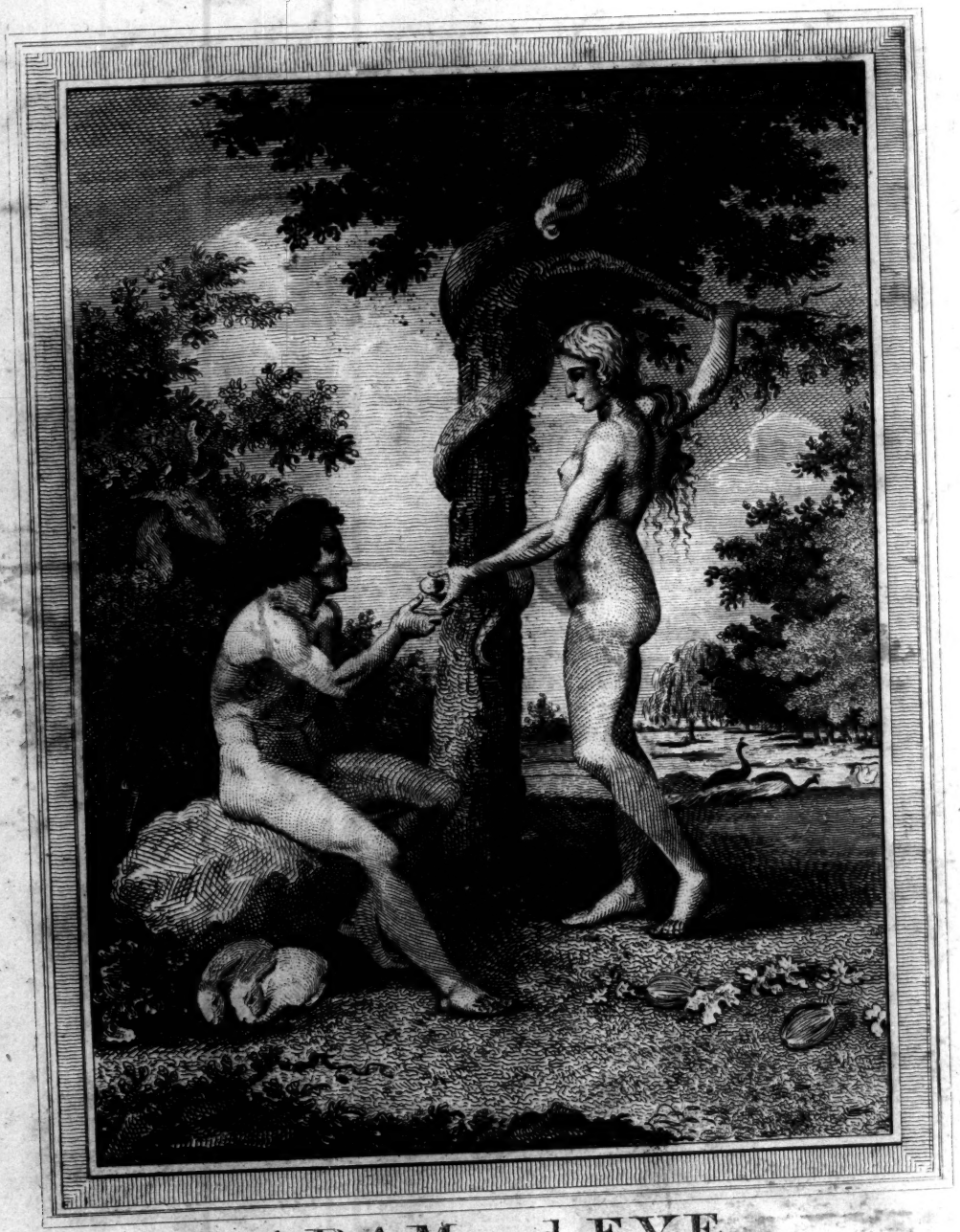

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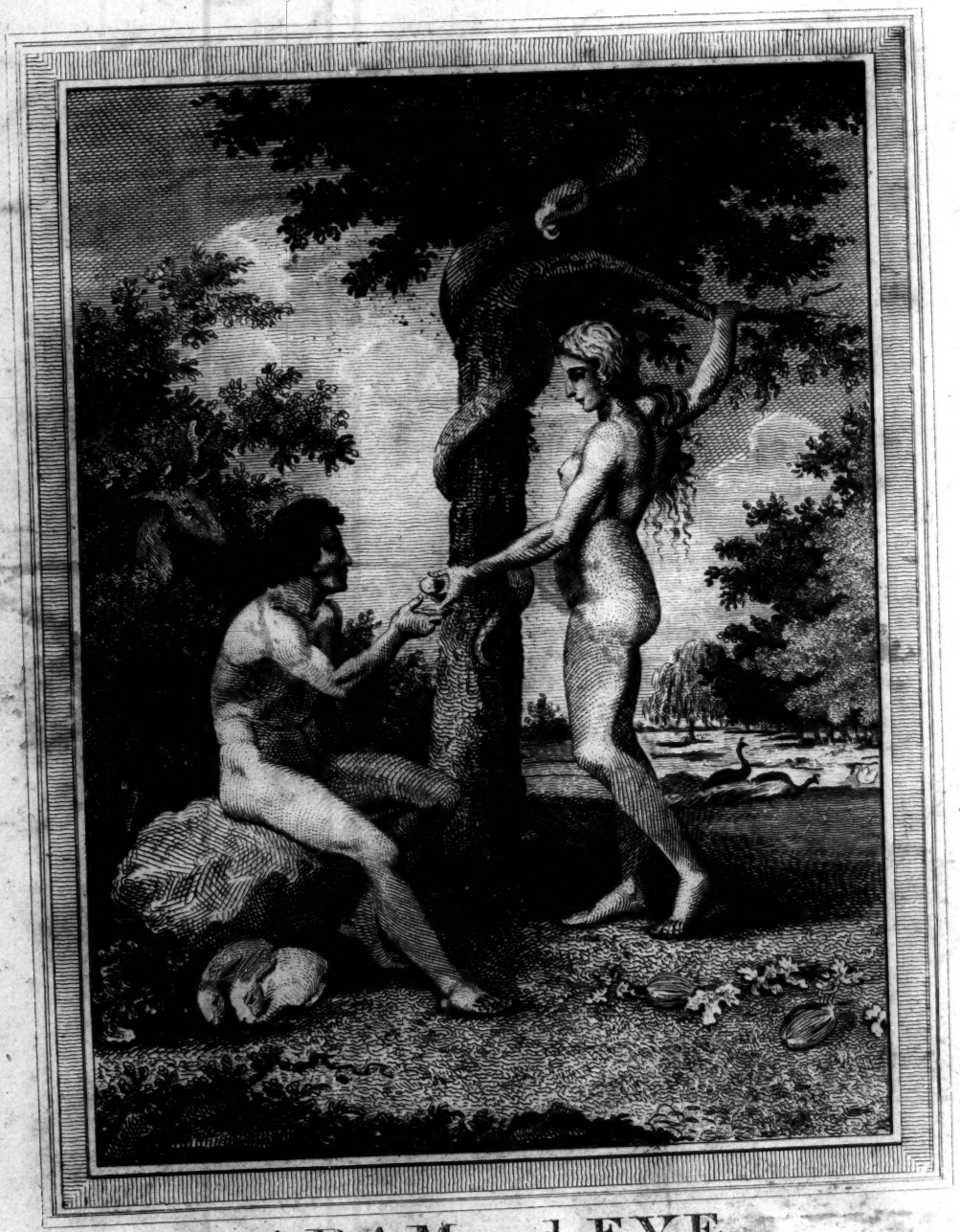

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FLEETWOOD'S
Complete History,
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE
FROM THE CREATION
of the World to the Incarnation
OF OUR Blessed Lord & SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST.

Book 1st Chap.r 9th

Wm Thomas Sculp.

ENGRAVED for the HISTORY of the BIBLE

A

HISTORY

OF THE

HOLY BIBLE,

FROM THE

Creation of the World,

TO THE INCARNATION OF OUR

Bleſſed Lord and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST;

CONTAINING

A clear and conciſe Account of every memorable Event, during a Period of above FOUR THOUSAND YEARS;

PARTICULARLY,

The Creation of the World, The Formation and Fall of Man, The Univerſal Deluge, The Building of Babel,	The Call of Abraham, The Travels of the Iſraelites, The Nature of the Moſaic Inſtitution, and	The Predictions of the Prophets, concerning the Coming, and Offices of the MESSIAH.

TOGETHER,

With an Authentic Narrative of the Lives and Tranſactions of

The most eminent Patriarchs, Prophets, and other Servants of GOD.

Who were diſtinguiſhed by Divine Grace, and made Inſtrumental in the Diſplay of Divine Wiſdom;

Such as

NOAH, ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB,	JOSEPH, MOSES, JOSHUA, SAMUEL,	DAVID, SOLOMON, JOB, ISAIAH,	JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL, DANIEL, JONAH, &c. &c.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES.

By the Rev. JOHN FLEETWOOD, D. D.

Author of the Life of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, Chriſtian's Prayer Book, &c. &c.

MANCHESTER:

PRINTED BY C. BANCKS, EXCHANGE-STREET.

1799.

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FOUR THOUSAND YEARS;

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The Fall of Man, | The Rise of Idolatry, | phets, concerning the Coming
The Deluge, Dispersion, | The Nature of the Jewish | and Offices of the Messi-
and Peopling of the Earth, | Religion, and | ah.

CONTAINING

The most eminent Patriarchs, Prophets, and other Servants of GOD,

Who were especially called by Divine Grace, and made faithful Stewards of Divine Wisdom;

ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES,

By the Rev. JOHN FLEETWOOD, D. D.

Author of several Books for Pulpit and Parish, Jobs Child's Christian's Prayer Book, &c. &c.

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PREFACE.

THERE is a peculiar Elegance and Propriety in the Title annexed to the Sacred Writings which are emphatically ſtiled The Bible, *or* The Book, *intimating its Superiority to all other Books, and the Sublimity and Importance of the Subjects on which it treats.*

The Remarks of too many Commentators, abound with critical Obſervations, while they are barren of uſeful and ſpiritual Reflections, and calculated to amuſe Curioſity rather than promote Piety. The greateſt Part of Writers, who have furniſhed us with an Hiſtorical Account of the Bible, have ſo perplexed the plain Narrative with their own ſtrange Conjectures, that the latter have confuſed the former, and thus conjoined, they have by no means Satisfied the Deſire of the ſerious Reader.

The GOD of Truth, willing to acquaint ſinful Mortals with his Mind and Will, hath provided his Spirit to enlighten our Underſtanding, and his written Word to bring thoſe Things which were tranſacted many Ages paſt, and in Places far remote, to our immediate View, in order to diſplay his Omnipotence, and excite the Veneration of wondering Mortals.

The Writers of the Old and New Teſtament agreeing in one and the ſame truth, their Teſtimony is ſo much the more enforced, as implying ſo many ſeveral Acts of one and the ſame Spirit, producing in divers Subjects one and the ſame Effect, even the Myſtery of our Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt: For though the different Writers have their own peculiar Method and Order, in the Context of their peculiar Parts of the Hiſtory, yet there appears a perfect Agreement upon the whole; as is evident from the cleareſt Demonſtration of the Learned in all Ages, who have beſtowed much Labour and extraordinary Induſtry in comparing their Teſtimonies.

The Old Teſtament is itſelf a Syſtem of all kinds of Knowledge civil and religious, moral and philoſophical, and generally uſeful for the Conduct of human life, as well as the chief Repoſitory, from which many Philoſophers and Legiſlators of different Ages, have drawn the choiceſt of their Obſervations.

The Excellency of ſacred Hiſtory will more evidently appear, if we compare it with the accounts of the beſt and moſt ancient Heathen writers, both Philoſophers and Hiſtorians.

How futile and trifling are the Reſearches and Diſcoveries of the Former, and the Accounts of the Latter, when compared with the glorious Diſplay of divine Wiſdom, the Triumphs of divine Grace, and the earneſt of eternal Glory contained in ſacred Writ? In this invaluable Treaſury of divine Knowledge are compriſed the whole of God's Will and Man's Duty, and the Old Teſtament, upon a diligent Search, will appear to have a moſt uniform Tendency and deſign to be a Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, *as the Hiſtory therein contained, and the Facts therein related, typify and propheſy ſuch Things, as might give Mankind Aſſurance of ſuch a Saviour, and diſtinguiſh him by ſuch Marks as might infallibly conceive them at his Appearance, that he was* the very Christ, that Prophet that should come into the World, *and that we are not* to look for another.

The Deſign of Religion being to make us wiſe for Eternity, to give us true Notions of God and ourſelves, and to point out the Path that leads to everlaſting Felicity; we cannot be too well acquainted with the ſacred Volume, on which it is

founded, or too well verſed in the Hiſtory, which confirms it. To aſſiſt therefore the Chriſtian Reader in the right Underſtanding of thoſe Things, on, which depends his everlaſting Peace, we have taken pains to correct many Neglects in our Tranſlation of the Bible, that have furniſhed wicked Men with Excuſes, and Libertines and Atheiſts with Matter of Jeſting.——It is certain, that one of the greateſt Favours God could have conferred on Men in a State of Miſery and Ignorance, was to inform them of their Duty, and teach them the means of becoming happy: therefore there is nothing more worthy of a reaſonable Man, and eſpecially of a Chriſtian, than to apply himſelf to the Study of thoſe things, which are revealed in the Holy Scriptures, ſince they were written for this very End.

To be careleſs or negligent in a Matter of ſuch Moment is highly Criminal, and an undoubted Mark of Irreligion and Profaneneſs. Beſides, infinite advantage may redound to the Cauſe of Truth, by making a ſimple Text plain and intelligible, and thereby overturning any of the pretended Grounds of Atheiſm and Infidelity, dangerous Error, ſuperſtitious Foppery, or ridiculous Invention: This End we preſume will be anſwered in the Courſe of our Labours, as we have conſulted the beſt Commentators, and laid down plain and eaſy Rules, whereby Perſons of the meaneſt Capacity may obſerve the moſt material Faults of all Tranſlations.

Confining ourſelves to what is Hiſtorical, we ſhall touch only upon thoſe Paſſages in the Prophets, which relate to the Hiſtory, but ſhall inſert thoſe of the Apocrypha, *which the Jews deemed authentic, and our Church hath appointed to be read, though ſome reject them as Uncertainties. To render our Plan more eaſy and familiar, we have ranged the whole into Chapters, according as the different Subjects and Occurrences have required, and have carefully attended to the Connection of Events, in order to prove the Authenticity of the Hiſtory in general. To avoid Perplexity, the Hiſtorical Part is carried on by itſelf, and the neceſſary Remarks and Obſervations are caſt into Notes at the Bottom of each Page; being aſſured, from Experience, that Remarks in the Series of the Narrative, muſt diſtract the Senſe, and take off the Pleaſure and Advantage of reading.——With reſpect to the Chronology, we have conſulted* Joſephus, Rufinus, *and other Writers of good Authority, and throughout each Period connected the ſacred and prophane Hiſtory. As from the time of Malachi, to the Birth of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, there is a Chaſm of about four hundred Years; to render the Work complete, Reference has been made to the beſt Authors, who have recorded the Tranſactions of thoſe Times.*

Theſe, with our former Labours, will furniſh a complete Hiſtory of the Bible, both Old and New Teſtament, bring the whole into one point of View, and exhibit a general Diſplay of the great Work of Man's Salvation, from the Time of its Promiſe to our firſt Parents, to its Accompliſhment in the Perſon of the bleſſed Jeſus. As it is, we recommend it to the Divine Bleſſing, which is abſolutely neceſſary to render it uſeful to the Promotion of God's Glory, and the Intereſt and Happineſs of Mankind; earneſtly praying that it may confirm and build up ſincere Chriſtians of every Denomination amongſt us in their moſt holy Faith, till the Benefits of Divine Grace here ſhall be realized in eternal Glory hereafter, when both Believers and Infidels ſhall have ſenſible Demonſtration, that the Word of God is true.

A COMPLETE HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, AND OF MAN. THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS, AND THEIR EXPULSION FROM PARADISE.

THE first instance of Divine Wisdom and Power known to us mortals, was that great and stupendous work, the *Creation* of the World. The Omnipotent Jehovah, having determined for reasons unknown to us, according to the eternal council of his own will, to create the Universe with all the beauties of Nature out of nothing; by an Almighty *Fiat* produced Light, which gave birth to the first Day, and was succeeded by the first Night.

In the beginning (says the inspired penman) *God created the Heaven and the Earth*, that is, this planetary world, consisting of the earth and other planets, having the Sun for their centre; all of which owe their origin to the power of a Supreme Creator. These were not, according to the notion of some ancient philosophers, eternal, nor did they owe their origin to chance and accident, but derive their beauty, order, and regularity, from that God whose *works are manifold*, and who *in wisdom made them all.*

When the grand architect set about the great work, we are told that *(a) the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*, or as it is interpreted by some learned commentators, brooded over the vast abyss, and impregnated, as well as rendered it capable of the disposition and order it was about to receive. The Creator pronounced his approbation of the work of his hands, that, *it was good*, and distinguished the light from the dark-

(a) The Spirit of God, &c. Various are the opinions of commentators concerning this much controverted passage; some think the word RUAH, should have been translated *Wind*, in this place, as it admits of that signification as well as the other; while others think by the Spirit of God may be understood the Spirit of the *Meſſiah*, agreeable to *Iſaiah* xi. 2. *And the Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him.* We think it evident from its production, that it was an emanation of divine power and energy, which by its moving on the Chaotic Mass conveyed into it a kind of fermentation, and prepared it for future exertion of the same power.

ness, by calling the former by the appellation of *Day*, and the latter by that of *Night*. Thus wisely did the Almighty appoint the day and night constantly to succeed each other, in the same alternate course as we now perceive them, and to form together, what we term a natural day; *and the Evening and the Morning were the first Day*, that is, by the course, or going round of this light, which we may suppose to have been commanded into being about noon, were formed an evening and a morning; so that at the ensuing noon the compass of a natural day of twenty-four hours, (the first day that existed) was fully completed.

The work of the second day consisted in laying the foundation of the Heaven, called by the name of *(b) Firmament*, which keeps the waters of the clouds, from those which are upon the earth. This done, God called all the expanse above this earth, whether it be the thicker parts that compose the region of the air, which we denominate the lower firmament, or the thinner or more subtile parts, to which we have given the appellation of the higher Firmament, *Heaven*, which concluded the work of the second day.

The creation yet consisted of nothing but light, the waters, and the firmament which divided the waters of the clouds from those upon the Earth, that are distinguished by the names of seas, rivers, &c. On the third day, therefore it pleased Almighty Power and Wisdom, to reduce the waters within bounds, when he said, *let the Waters under the Heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry Land appear; and it was so.* The voice of God was immediately obeyed; the waters separated themselves from the surface of the earth, and on their retreat, the dry land appeared, which was called Earth, as was the gathering together of the waters, Seas.

The work of dividing the waters being thus completed, it received the divine approbation; but as the great Creator designed the earth for the future habitation of man and beast, being as yet barren and uncultivated, to render it fit for the intended inhabitants, he determined to bestow on it a prolific virtue, and endow it with the power of vegetation.

In the first place appeared the Grass which covered the earth, and was designed as pasture for the Brute Creation; then succeeded *(c)* Flowers, Plants, and Trees, with all kinds of Vegetables, in full growth, proportion, and maturity. Though the first fruits of the earth were all of them produced without any seeds, by the bare word of God; yet, to perpe-

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(b) Firmament. The *Hebrew* word, which we translate *Firmament* signifies *Expanse*, or *Extension*. This term is applied not only to the sky, but the atmosphere, and seems here particularly to refer to that extent of airy matter, or atmosphere, which encompasses the earth: and separates the clouds from the waters that be upon the earth, according to the seventh verse of the first chapter of *Genesis*.

(c) Flowers. It is not to be imagined, that the new created earth with its abundant fruitfulness, could be produced according to the ordinary course of things in the space of twenty-four hours, and that without the assistance of

perpetuate the same, each kind contained its own seed, which being sown in the earth, or falling when ripe from the plants themselves, should continue a succession to the end of the world. This likewise received his gracious probate. The vegetable tribe now covered the earth with a green and flowery carpet, and rendered it fit for the reception of its inhabitants; but the wise hand of Omnipotence, further to display his power and goodness, contracted the *(d)* Light which he had created the first day and diffused throughout the universe, into proper orbs, or those great luminaries of Heaven, called Sun and Moon, one to rule the day, and the other the night; and to render these more useful by the order of their motion, he appointed them for signs, to distinguish the seasons, and to divide time, by which they have been, are, and ever will be, of such essential benefit to mankind.

The atmosphere was now rarified, and the bodies of the heavenly luminaries became visible; by their influence on the plants, they promoted the office of vegetation, finishing their revolutions in their proper periods of time. The Almighty Creator having employed the first four days in the creation of things inanimate; on the fifth, he passed the Omnipotent *Fiat* for the production of living creatures, saying, *let the Waters bring forth abundantly, the (e) moving Creature that hath life and (f) Fowl that may fly above the Earth in the open Firmament of Heaven.* In this day's work we may remark the gradual proceedure of the Almighty, from the inanimate creation, to Fish and Fowl, the least perfect species of animals, by which the different orders of created beings are linked together, and the various ranks of creatures make a regular system.

God likewise formed great *(g)* Whales or all kinds of large fish, which the waters produce, and on a survey of this creation perceived that what he had made entirely answered the end he proposed in their formation. The manifold shape of their

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of the Sun; but the Almighty by his omnipotent FIAT spoke them into existence and perfection in an instant: for he only spoke the word, and they were made, he commanded and they were created. *Let the Earth bring forth grass, the Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit Tree yielding Fruit after its kind, whose Seed is in itself upon the Earth, and it was so.* Gen. i. 11.

(d) Light. Those who assert that God previously prepared the Orbs of Light before they shone upon the new creation, may as well deprive him of the glorious attribute power, and with *Des Carts* say that matter was eternal.

(e) Moving. The word which is here translated, *Moving Creature*, signifies any creeping animal, and is therefore not inapplicable to fish; which, though they have not feet, lie upon their bellies, and by the help of their fins, creep as it were through the water.

(f) Fowl. There is a seeming contradiction between this passage and that in *Gen.* 2 and 19, where it is said, *Out of the Ground God formed every Beast of the Field, and every Fowl of the Air:* but the contradiction will vanish, if we consider, that neither denies what the other affirms, though they speak differently; as the description of *Moses*, by no means supposes that the earth did not bring forth fowl; besides there are birds to the present day, whose chief element is the water; and many of the learned are of opinion that they derive their origin, partly from the water, and partly from the earth, from whence, and from their guiding their course with their tails, *Pluto* calls fowls the kindred of fish. *Stackhouse.*

(g) Great Whales. The *Hebrew* word signifies all kind of large fish, that belong to the seas.

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different bodies, the infinite variety of their instincts and talents, but all so properly adapted to each particular species, and tending to the preservation of the creature possessed of them, and the continuation of its kind, amply declare the wisdom of the Creator, and prove that according to his declaration, it is good.

God therefore gave them this blessing; *be fruitful and multiply, and fill the Waters with Fish, and the Earth with Fowl,* enduing them at the same time with a prolific virtue, thereby to propagate their species, preserve their particular kinds, and multiply the individuals of each; and this was the work of the fifth day.

Moreover it pleased divine power and goodness to add to the fertility of the earth, and bring forth *the living Creature after his kind, Cattle and creeping Things, and Beasts of the Earth after his kind,* and thus having made them complete, *He saw it was good.*

The Almighty having thus rendered the world fit for the reception, sustenance, and delight of that creature, to whom he intended to give the rule over it, to crown this great work, changes the commanding expression, *Let this* or *that be so,* into, *Let us make Man in our own (h) Image, after our Likeness;* a form of speech that represents the Divine Being as acting more immediately himself, and entering on the master-piece of creation with a peculiar degree of deliberation. Designing the creature he was now about to form, for the government (under his auspicious Providence) of this sublunary world, he enters upon it in a solemn manner, and having taken the resolution, declares in express terms, the supremacy with which he determined to invest him; *and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth. So God created Man,* into whose nostrils, though formed of the dust of the earth, he breathed the breath of Life, and *Man became a living Soul.*

In this manner did the Almighty form Man, and cloth him with superiority and honour, giving him dominion over all the other animals of the creation, and enduing him with knowledge and power. To prove also that Eve was created on the same day, though the precise manner of her formation is not taken notice of till the next chapter; the inspired penman in his account of the sixth day's work, subjoins, *male and female created he them.* The manner in which the universal Parent of Nature formed our mother Eve is thus related. That having already formed Man out of the dust of the earth,

(h) Let us make man in our own image, &c. It is past all manner of dispute, that the Hebrew word ELOHIM or ALEIM is a noun substantive of the plural number, and the best criticks have inferred from these words, that the Holy Trinity is expressed in the clearest manner.

The words image and likeness principally imply a resemblance of the Divine graces, as in *Coloss.* xiii. 10, where we are commanded to *put on the new man, after the image of him that created us.*

God

God declares his intention of providing him a partner; accordingly he caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and while he slept, took out one of his *(i)* Ribs, closing up the flesh, made the Woman and brought her to him. Adam no sooner received from the hand of the Almighty his new formed wife, than self-convinced of the obligation that arose therefrom to the strictest friendship, the most cordial love and sincere affection, he exclaimed with rapture; *this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh,* and farther infers the duties that naturally result from hence, as the reunion of man and woman; *therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.* Thus early was the divine institution of marriage, in a state of naked innocence, when our first parents had no guilt, and consequently no shame.

The Almighty having thus finished the last, but most perfect parts of the creation, and joined them together, proceeds to give them his benediction, vesting them with the blessings of fruitfulness and dominion. *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and have dominion over it:* thus constituting Man lord over all other creatures, and giving him the product of the whole earth for his sustenance and pleasure. That he might be convinced of the efficacy of the benediction, and the extent of the power, with which he was vested; the Almighty is represented by the sacred historian, as bringing to Adam, every different beast of the field and fowl of the air, in order to fix their distinct names. Accordingly Adam named them all, and this giving names or titles, served two purposes; first, to distinguish each species from the rest; and secondly, to assure our first parents, of the subjection to him, in which the Almighty had placed them. Thus finished on the sixth day, the stupendous work of creation, which, when the Creator surveyed, he pronounced to be *very good.* On the seventh day God *(k)* ended all his works, and to impress mankind with a due sense of his wisdom and goodness in the creation, and the obligation due to him from his creatures, he appointed that day to be kept holy.

All things being then completely formed; to shew his peculiar favour towards man, God placed him with his female partner, in a most beautiful spot of ground called *(l) Eden,* in order to cultivate and keep it, allowing

(i) Rib. The Atheists have formed many ridiculous queries concerning this point, and among others demanded, whether the rib, out of which the woman was formed, was a superfluous one. To this we shall only reply, that all the works of God are perfect; and suppose that the same Almighty power that created the whole universe, might with the same ease have added any part of the body after he had taken it away, such a method of forming her, being more agreeable than any other to God's order and wisdom.

(k) Ended. The original word signifies *had ended;* and if so rendered, would obviate the objection, which may be drawn from the seeming contradiction between this passage and that which immediately follows, as it would then shew, that as on the seventh day, there remained nothing to be done, [a translation that the greatest *Hebrew* masters will allow,] therefore God rested, not from fatigue, but voluntarily ceased from creating.

(l) The word *Eden* in the Hebrew signifies pleasure, and indicates the beauty of the place in which their munificent Creator placed our first parents. It is the general opinion of divines and philosophers, that this blissful spot

lowing him the free use of every herb, fruit, and flower around him, excepting one which is called by the sacred historian, the *(m) tree of knowledge of good and evil;* nay, permitted him to eat of the tree of *(n)* life, to encourage and excite him to fidelity and obedience to his maker; while on the other hand, he annexes a dreadful penalty to the violation of the sacred injunction; *in the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely (o) die.* Thus fixed in the most beauteous situation, possessed of innocence, devoid of guilt, and free from care, the happiness of our first parents seems complete; but alas! their bliss was transient, their innocence fleeting, and their exemption from care comparatively short: Satan the arch-fiend having resolved to tamper with them, and make an effort to reduce them from their obedience to their Creator, and involve them together with himself, in the ruins of apostacy. In order to accomplish this accursed design, by means of the *(p)* Serpent, as an instrument; he attacks the woman, through whom he thought afterwards to prevail with the man. He begins his vile insinuation with a question; *Yea hath God ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the garden?* in order to learn from thence, the certainty of the Divine injunction.

The woman had no sooner related the positive command of God, that they were allowed, to *eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden,* but that on pain of death they were forbidden to eat of the fruit of *the tree, which is in the midſt of the garden;* than that father of lies, in contradiction to the divine decree of the God of truth, told her, she should *not ſurely die;* and further, to gain upon her desire already inflamed, added, that the reason of it being forbidden, was that by eating it, they would ennoble their nature, and become as Gods themselves. The infernal project succeeded; the woman had long viewed the fruit with great desire, till at length the beauty of its colour, and its miraculous power so inflamed

was about Mesopotamia, that country being not far distant from Judea. There is a tradition of the fathers, that when Adam was expelled from Paradise, he came at last to Judea, died there, and was buried on a mount, which his posterity, because the head of the first man was laid there, called MOUNT CALVARY, where the great Redeemer was crucified, for the expiation of the sin of Adam, the first and original transgressor. This opinion was first taught by *Ireneus*, about the latter end of the second century.

(m) Tree of knowledge, &c. There are various opinions, concerning the nature and properties of this tree, which was forbidden to our first parents: some think that it had a baneful quality, directly opposite to that of the tree of life, while others imagine that it is thus called by the historian, because after Adam and Eve had eaten of it, they became sensible of the good they had lost, and the evil they had incurred, by their disobedience.

(n) Tree of Life, &c. The ancient fathers think this tree was so called, from its virtue to repair the animal spirits, till man should be translated from a corporeal life, to a life spiritual and immortal: this opinion is supported by Moses, who tells us, Genesis the 3d and 22d. "That had man, even after the fall, eaten of the tree of life, he would have lived for ever."

(o) Not immediately cease to live, but be liable to mortality, with all its attendant frailties and miseries.

(p) Serpent. It is here observable, that *Moſes* in his account of the fall, mentions not the agent, the Devil, but only the instrument of the agent, the Serpent. This is the opinion of the best commentators, who alledge, that the Devil actually made use of the Serpent, to talk to Eve and to tempt her. That it was a real Serpent, and not an imaginary one, that spoke to her must be true; but it only spoke by means of the Devil, who used that creature as fittest to be employed in that service.

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her passions, that she ventured to pluck the fruit, and eat her own death; forgetting the express command of her Maker, and unawed by the dreadful menaces denounced against disobedience. Not content with the ruin of herself, she offers the fatal fruit to her husband, who received it from her, and involved himself in the common mortality.

Their eyes were now opened indeed; but what to behold? the most aggravated folly: monstrous impiety! what to discover? their shame, and the fall and disgrace of their nature. Conscious guilt stared them in the face, and they were reduced to the poor subterfuge of concealing their nakedness; whereas in a state of innocence, like children, they were naked and were not ashamed. When our first parents continued in that blissful state, they no sooner heard the voice of the Lord approaching them, than they ran to meet him, and with humble joy welcomed his gracious visits; but now their Maker was become their terror, their conscience painted their transgression in the blackest light, all hope was banished, and nothing remained but horror and despair. Now therefore, when they heard *the voice of the Lord walking in the garden*, calling *Adam, where art thou?* [not by way of receiving information, but to render him more sensible of his transgression of the Divine command; fear came upon him, and they hid themselves: the man answered with the utmost confusion, *I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.* Confessing his nakedness, he confessed his guilt, of which his omniscient Creator immediately convicted him; and knowing he could alone obtain the knowledge of the same by eating the forbidden fruit, demanded of him the means by which he came to know that he was naked. Though Adam sought not to deny, he attempted to palliate his crime, and transfer the guilt upon his wife as the cause of the same; *the woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* When God remonstrated with her upon her criminal behaviour, she endeavoured to lay it upon the Serpent—*The Serpent beguiled me and I did eat.* The fallen pair having thus confessed their transgression, the Almighty immediately passed sentence upon the Serpent, as the instrument employed by the great enemy of mankind, to seduce them to the horrid commission of a most disingenuous crime; and to give posterity a sense of the heinous nature of sinning against God, as well as thus early make known his gracious design of raising up a Saviour from the seed of the woman, who should bring redemption to Israel, and vanquish the kingdom of sin and death—*Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field, upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.* (q) *And I will put enmity*

(q) *And I will put enmity*, &c. That is, there shall subsist an irreconcileable hatred, between the human and diabolical race; because at the instigation of the latter, the former had incurred the penalty of death and the train of miseries,

enmity between thee and the woman, and between her ſeed and thy ſeed, it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.

Nor did the woman pass without awful tokens of the divine displeasure; but was solemnly given to understand, that she entailed upon herself sorrow from conception, pain in childbirth, and subjection to her husband. *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow ſhalt thou bring forth children, and thy deſire ſhall be to thy huſband, and he ſhall rule over thee.*

The punishment of Adam consisted in a life of perpetual toil and slavery, in order to keep in due subjection, those passions and appetites, to gratify which he had transgressed the Divine command. *Becauſe thou haſt hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and haſt eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, ſaying thou ſhalt not eat of it; curſed is the ground for thy ſake, in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee; and thou ſhalt eat the herb of the field: in the ſweat of thy face thou ſhalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of duſt waſt thou taken, and to duſt ſhalt thou return.*

Having thus solemnly pronounced the awful decree, both on the cause of the offence, and the offenders themselves; God, to enhance their sense of the crime and the tokens of his resentment, expelled them from the blissful regions of paradise, and man was consigned to toil and labour; and to preserve the forbidden fruit sacred from the unhallowed hands of the corupted race of mankind, (*r*) *Cherubims* were placed at the east end of the garden. Thus fell our first parents and thereby lost their original rectitude, introduced moral evil, and entailed sin, with all its dreadful concomitants upon their posterity, who from that moment to the present have felt the dire effects of the fall; though blessed be God their state is not desperate, but capable of being repaired by the blood of the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven.

CHAP. II.

THE MURDER OF ABEL. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARK. NOAH'S ENTRY. THE UNIVERSAL DELUGE. EXIT OF NOAH AND HIS FAMILY OUT OF THE ARK. THE WICKEDNESS OF CHAM.

THE fatal effects of the Fall soon appeared after the expulsion of our first parents from the blissful mansions of *Eden*. The human race was increased by the birth of two sons to *Eve*, (*s*) *Cain* and *Abel*, the latter of whom

miseries, which mortality entails. But the seed of the woman, Jesus the mighty Saviour and Redeemer of his people, shall bruise the Serpent's head, by making atonement to divine justice for Adam's transgression, destroying the powers of darkness, and obtaining eternal redemption for all who believe in him.

(*r*) *Cherubims* or Angels, whose refulgence resemble the vibrations of a flaming sword. They may also be considered as whatever tends to strike fear and terror.

(*s*) *Cain*. As it is mentioned by the sacred historian, that Eve on the birth of Cain, exulted and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord, and as the term CANA, signifies

whom fell a victim to the envy and revenge of his brother. When these two brothers grew up to years of maturity, they followed different employments: Cain betook him to tillage, but (*t*) Abel engaged in the pastoral life, being a keeper of sheep.

It happened in process of time that each brought their offering to the Lord, according to the different occupations that they followed; Cain's being of the fruits of the ground, and Abel's that of the firstlings of his flock with the fat thereof. The Lord, for causes then best known to himself, accepted Abel's offering, but rejected that of Cain, who, incensed on that account, discovers envy in his countenance, and was therefore reprimanded by God, who intimated that the cause of the rejection of his offering proceeded from his want of sincerity; assuring him that if for the future he acted with integrity, he should be accepted, otherwise he should be treated as a delinquent and hypocrite. But this reprimand of his Maker had no effect upon Cain, who retained his envy and resentment against his innocent brother, and took the first opportunity to slay him.

Thus prevailed the inordinate passions, and produced the first murder, on no other ground than rancour and malice, at the just dealing of an upright God, who preferred the offering of Abel, because it was presented with a heart more sincere, grateful, and humble, than that of Cain. The Almighty, as he called for his father *Adam* after his first transgression, in like manner demands of Cain where he was; (not, as before observed, for information, but to strike him with guilt and shame: the criminal not only lied unto his maker, but insolently asked, as if displeased with the question, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* But this attempt to evade confession availed not, for the Lord not only charged him with the murder of his brother; but convicted him of the same. *What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A Fugitive and a Vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.*

Cain, struck with the severity of this denunciation, convinced of the atrocious nature of his crime, and deploring the misery of his situation, exclaimed (*u*) *My punishment is greater than I can bear!* Nevertheless, he retained his rancorous and disobedient temper, and seems to have been much less concerned for his sin, than his punishment. *Behold,* said he,

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signifies possession, some have been inclined to think, that *Eve* was persuaded that this son was the promised Seed, which was to break the Serpent's head; but if that was the case, time soon evinced her disappointment.

(*t*) The word *Abel* signifies vanity; either as it presaged the suddenness of his death, or that it denoted the vanity of mortality, to which all were now liable.

(*u*) *My punishment, &c.* In some of the versions, this passage is rendered, "My offence is too great to obtain pardon;" but the Septuagint and the Hebrew confirm the first sense.

thou haſt driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face ſhall I be hid; and I ſhall be a fugitive and a vagaboad upon the earth; and it ſhall come to paſs that every one that findeth me ſhall ſlay me. But the Almighty reſerving to himself the ſole right of punishishing Cain for this crime, and at the same time desirous of exciting in posterity, proper apprehensions of murder, secured him against the dread of being himself slain, declaring that he would avenge his death seven fold; thereby intimating as hereafter declared in sacred Writ, *Vengeance is mine ſaith the Lord:* that is, it is not lawful for private persons of their own authority to kill such as deserve death. To give him assurance of his promise God set a (*w*) *ſign* or *wonder* before him, lest any finding him, should kill him, of which he was in danger, because the world being now near 130 years old, it abounded with people descended from the sons and daughters of Adam. After this Cain departed from the presence of the Lord, and took up his abode in the land of Nod, to the eastward of Eden, beyond the country of Babylon, where he took a wife who bare him a son called *Enoch*, after whom he named a city that he built in those parts. From the loins of Cain, in regular succession was produced *Jabal*, who taught men to pitch tents, which were requisite for their subsistence and that of their cattle, before agriculture was reduced to an art; for though men fed cattle before by the invention of tents, he taught them how to remove to more fertile and fresh spots, after those which had been grazed on were no longer fit for subsistence.

Jubal the brother of Jabal first invented musical instruments, *Tubal-Cain* was also descended from the same stock, being the son of *Lamech* by his wife *Zillah*, and was the first artificer in brass, iron, and other metals. This is the Mosaic account of Cain's descendants, which seems to have been recorded in order to inform posterity who first invented certain arts, and were afterwards infamous from their wicked practices. Our first parent, having been deprived of his son Abel, by the malice and barbarity of his brother Cain, God was pleased to raise him up another son, whom he called *Seth*, or *appointed*.

From *Seth* sprang *Enos*, in whose days the sacred historian informs us, that men began to institute stated forms and ceremories in the worship of Almighty God.

Moses from this *Seth*, continues the line of Adam to ten generations before the Flood, with the ages of those long-lived antediluvians. Of all the posterity of Adam the most remarkable is *Enoch*, who for his eminent piety and virtue was exempted from mortality, being immediately, that is, without passing through the valley of the shadow of death, translated to the

(*w*) There are divers vague conjectures and absurd notions concerning the mark that God set upon Cain; but they all serve rather to perplex than clear up the passage, it is most reasonable to suppose that the text should be rendered, *that God appointed to Cain a ſign or token* to assure him that none should kill him, according to the *Septuagint*.

realms

realms of bliss. Pious Enoch left behind him his son *Methuſalah*, whose long life rendered him eminent in the list of Patriarchs. From Methusalah, sprang *Lamech* the father of *Noah*, at whose birth it is remarkable that his father presaged the extraordinary favours which God should bestow upon him; *This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground which the Lord hath curſed.* His prediction was indeed true; but not exact in point of circumstance; for Noah was instrumental in being the restorer of the desolated world, delivering the Church, and preserving it from perishing.

If we consider the prodigious length of men's lives in this age, the strength of their constitution from a temperate life, and the advanced years in which they begat children, the number of inhabitants before the Flood will appear to be very numerous. Hence it came to pass that the families of Cain and Seth began to enter into nuptial alliances; for though for a long time the posterity of Seth shunned converse with the offspring of Cain, on account of their cruel disposition, yet, when the world grew very populous, (x) the Sons of the righteous shook off their former reserve, and entertained a criminal desire for the offspring of Cain, called by Moses, *the daughters of men.* This desire being indulged, in course of time prevailed on the sons of God, or family of Seth, to take wives, merely to gratify their lascivious fancy; which shews that though they were the offspring of the righteous, they were greatly degenerated from their piety and strict obedience to the Divine Laws; for it is very observable, that immediately after this alliance, the Almighty complains of the universal depravity of mankind; the children of the Righteous having been infected by the practices of the Wicked, and too far involved with them in a sinful gratification of their lusts and passions. Nay, so aggravated was their wickedness, so heinous their sin, that the Lord is said to have repented *that he had made man upon earth*, and to have determined to cut him off. But the piety of righteous Noah obtained grace and favour in the eyes of his God, who was graciously pleased to reserve him and his family, consisting of eight persons, as eternal monuments of his goodness, and standing tokens of his everlasting love to his Church and People.

The Almighty Parent of the Universe, who is merciful in all his ways, though men are corrupt and abominable, gave a signal proof of his forbearance, in allowing mankind an hundred and twenty years to repent; nay, to magnify the riches of his goodness, when that term was almost

(x) *Sons of God.* Commentators in general understand by the terms, "Sons of God," the children of Seth, who are distinguished thereby from the daughters of Men, (the children of Cain,) who were as remarkable for their wickedness as the other family had been for their piety and zeal for the worship of the true God. Upon the whole, the design of the historian, is evidently to shew that the children of Seth contracted an alliance with the daughters of Cain, and joined in the universal corruption of mankind.

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expired he gave them a second warning, being yet unwilling to destroy them.

But at length when the Lord saw that mankind were so universally corrupted, that they despised his forbearance, and persisted in their wickedness in spite of all that could be done to reclaim them; he made known to his servant Noah, his aweful determination to involve them, and the earth they inhabited, in one general destruction by a flood of water. According therefore to his gracious design towards Noah and his family, whom in his wise providence he had appointed to replenish the depopulated world, God warned him to make an (*y*) Ark, or large vessel, to contain his family and some of all creatures; for seven days hence, (says he,) *I will cauſe it to rain forty days and forty nights upon the earth*; in which time if they had repented, and turned unto the Lord their God, to his service and worship, there is good grounds to believe their doom would have been reversed, even as *Nineveh* was saved by the turning of its inhabitants to the Lord, at the preaching of his servant *Jonah*.

In obedience to the divine command, Noah set about the arduous work, which he finished precisely according to God's direction, before the rain began to fall, having been greatly encouraged by an assurance from his Maker, that though he destroyed all Flesh he would establish his covenant with him.

The form and dimensions of this ark are best described by the sacred Historian; *And this is the faſhion in which thou ſhalt make it; the length of the Ark ſhall be three hundred* (*z*) *cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window ſhalt thou make to the Ark, and in a cubit ſhalt thou finiſh it above; and the door of the Ark, ſhalt thou ſet in the ſide thereof, with lower, ſecond, and third ſtories ſhalt thou make it.*

The necessary preparations being thus made, God commanded Noah and his family to come into the Ark, and to take in with him every living Creature; but with distinction in reſpect to their quality. Of *clean* beasts, he was to take them in by sevens, the male and the female, that is three pair of each, and the seventh for sacrifice; but of *unclean* only by two, the male and his female.

These creatures, as it were, by instinct came to Noah, who placed them according to their size and nature in the ark, having already provided for their subsistence. Having thus obeyed the divine direction, the pious Patriarch entered the Ark with his family; in the six hundredth year of his age, and on (*a*) the seven-

(*y*) *Ark.* The Ark was supposed to be a broad flat bottomed vessel, resembling a chest; the words translated *Gopher Wood* is variously rendered; by some *plained boards*, by some tetragonal planks, by others cedar-wood, box, and Cypress-wood.

(*z*) The ſtandard Cubit of the Jews was equal to twenty-two of our inches, consequently the Ark was five hundred and forty-seven feet long, ninety-one feet broad, and fifty-four feet high; so that it was wisely adapted to its design, which was to save a remnant of all creatures on the face of the earth.

(*a*) The Seventeenth Day of the second month; that is about the beginning of May.

teenth

teenth day of the second month the face of things began to wear a gloomy aspect, and threaten some dreadful judgement. The windows or cataracts of Heaven were opened, and the Earth was overspread with a dreadful inundation. In vain did sinful mortals seek for shelter, or endeavour by climbing to shelter themselves from the common ruin, for mountains and vallies were soon alike, and every refuge was banished their sight. Forty days and nights did it rain without intermission, when the ark began to float and was lifted up above the earth. A dismal scene now appeared; the earth with all its beautiful variety of nature and art was now no more; nothing remained but a watery desart abounding with wrecks of men and things, all of which (the inhabitants of the Ark excepted) were overwhelmed in the dreadful inundation. The Almighty having thus avenged himself of a sinful world, began now to entertain benevolent thoughts towards his reserved inhabitants of the Ark; and mindful of the covenant he made with his servant Noah, caused a wind to blow, which drove back the waters, and left the earth dry.

The first token which Noah discovered of the cessation of the flood, was the resting of the Ark upon the mountains of (*b*) ARARAT. This was about the beginning of October, and about the middle of December following the tops of the mountains appeared. The smallest appearance of any thing substantial was a pleasing prospect to Noah, who had been confined a whole year (for so long the waters continued over the earth) and beheld nothing around him but water; but at the same time wisely thinking, that though the tops of the mountains were visible, the vallies were even then overflowed, he patiently waited forty days longer: when opening the window of the Ark he let fly a Raven, in order to learn whether the waters were dried. Encouraged by the absence of the Raven seven days; he let fly a Dove, which, finding no resting place, returned to its old habitation. Seven days afterwards the Patriarch sent out the same bird, which returned with an olive-branch, a happy certainty that the waters were removed from the place where the olive-tree stood.

Still determined not to be too hasty he remained in the Ark seven days more, and then sent out the Dove a third time; and as she did not return, he prepared for his exit out of the Ark. Nevertheless, though he made the necessary preparations, mindful of God's direction, he ventured not forth, till fifty five days afterwards, in order that the earth might be dry for his reception.

Accordingly, he went out of the Ark, on God's positive command, on the twenty-seventh day of the second month; so that as before observed, there was an exact solar year, from the time in which the rain began to descend, to that in which Noah and his family came out of the Ark with

(*b*) *Ararat.* There are various opinions concerning the situation of mount Ararat; but the most general as well as agreeable to reason, is that it was near the middle of Armenia.

all the living creatures he had taken into it. This was about the beginning of the month of May, when nature appears in her bloom and verdure; and there was abundance of pasture for the refreshment of the creatures, that had been so long confined in the Ark, as well as afforded all that could contribute to the use and delight of the sons of men: Noah, had no sooner set his foot on dry land, than he erected an Altar unto the God of his salvation, as a token of his gratitude for the mighty deliverance he had wrought for him and his family, whom he had reserved for replenishing the depopulated world.

The incense offered by the pious Patriarch, came up to the Lord with a sweet smelling savour, from the purity of his intention; and God was pleased to signify his approbation, not only by establishing his former covenant with Noah (and in him with his posterity) but graciously assured him, that he would no more curse the ground for man's sake, (*c*) for the imagination of his heart was evil from his youth, nor extirpate the whole race of creatures any more.

Having thus wonderfully restored the order of things to its proper state; the blessing pronounced unto Noah and his posterity, is renewed by the bequest of universal possession and dominion of the new earth: the Flood was the forfeiture and penalty for non-allegiance; whereas by this renewal of lease or tenure, the curse on man's old territory was fully accaccomplished, and man made a free tenant again, the Almighty reserved to himself the conditional clause of service and obedience from the date of the Flood.

Accordingly God pronounced his blessing upon Noah and his children, commanded them to multiply, and fill the earth; and, whereas they had formerly taken no other food than vegetables, they were now, after the flood, permitted to eat flesh, but particularly injoined to abstain from the blood, and flesh strangled from which the blood had not been drawn; lest the human race, like the bestial, should eat creatures alive; that is, the blood as well as the flesh. But tho' the supreme Governor of the universe, permitted them to kill animals, for their food and sustenance, he most solemnly forbade them to shed the blood of man; declaring that shedding human blood, should be retaliated by the same; *whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed*. God then proceeded to ratify the covenant he had made with Noah not to destroy the world and its inhabitants any more by water; and to give him assurance of the promise, placed the (*d*) rainbow

(*c*) Some commentators think that *for*, should be rendered *though*, as such translation makes God approve of evil actions: but we cannot discern the propriety of this remark; for as the Almighty in his wisdom might be supposed to perceive that mankind would ever retain the infection of the fall, he might be supposed to reason thus: ---As experience proves that man from his youth is prone to evil, as sin is interwoven with his nature, I will not any more thus punish sin, but suffer the order of things to continue, reserving their punishment for a future state.

(*d*) *Rainbow*. The Jews, saith a learned writer, when they see the Rainbow, bless God for being mindful of

bow as a token in the clouds. *I ſet my bow in the cloud;* a bow unſtringed, a bow hanging in the cloud, an emblem of the Divine favour, that he would not ſuddenly ſhoot forth the arrows of implacable wrath, though provoked in the higheſt degree. Though the *old* world was deſtroyed for the wickedneſs of its inhabitants, and the *new* world might be expected to have been filled with people of a better diſpoſition; as in the ark there were unclean as well as clean beaſts; ſo in the family of righteous Noah, there was a wicked *Cham*, as well as a pious *Shem* and *Japheth*.

Accordingly there was one of the three ſons of Noah, who were preſerved in the ark to people the uninhabited world, that, by his wickedneſs, not only brought upon himſelf the curſe of his father, but the vengeance of the Almighty; and inſtead of propagating a race of pious children, was father of an untoward generation that felt the ſevereſt ſtrokes of Divine wrath.

This aroſe from the firſt palpable token of human degeneracy after the deluge. Noah, having received the eſtabliſhment of God's covenant, and a command to multiply and replenish the earth, aſſiduouſly applied himſelf to agriculture, and in the courſe of his labours planted a vineyard. Naturally deſirous of taſting the fruit of his labour, and unapprized of the intoxicating quality of the juice, he drank too freely, through the heat of the weather, and, being overcome thereby, laid down to ſleep in his tent; where, by the ruffling of the wind, or the diſcompoſure of his body, he was uncovered in that part, which nature teaches us to conceal.

In this poſture he was found by his ſon Cham, who, inſtead of covering his father's nakedneſs and concealing his ſhame, expoſed his weakneſs and ridiculed his ſituation. But his brothers, endued with filial piety, and moved at the profligate behaviour of Cham, and the indecent poſture of their aged parent, went and fetched a garment, and looking the contrary way, to avoid the diſguſting ſight, covered his nakedneſs. When Noah recovered from the ſtupefaction, into which the wine had thrown him, and was informed of his younger ſon's flagrant neglect of duty; he uttered a curſe implying that Cham's violation of filial duty would be retaliated upon him, in the wretchedneſs and degeneracy of his children, particularly the race of Cain; *Curſed be* (*e*) Canaan, *a ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be to his brethren.* With equal warmth did he applaud and bleſs the pious behaviour of his ſons Shem and Japheth *(f) Bleſſed be the Lord God of Shem, God ſhall enlarge Ja-*

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of his covenant and faithful in his promiſe: but they have no right to appropriate that to themſelves, for it was made to all the human race, the Jews not being a diſtinct body of people till ſeven hundred years afterwards.

(*e*) *Canaan*, That is all the deſcendants of Cham, as well as himſelf, for Canaan was the ſon of Cham.

(*f*) *Bleſſed*, &c. This bleſſing had its effect, for the worſhip of the true God, continued in the race of Shem, and Japheth became very rich and powerful; an inſtance of the duty, children owe their parents, and that they ſhould cover their faults, and not expoſe them.

pheth

pheth, and he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan ſhall be his ſervant.

Good old Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, and paid the debt of nature at the age of nine hundred and fifty. The ſacred hiſtorian mentions no other children of Noah than theſe three, from each of whom deſcended a numerous race, which in proceſs of time peopled the whole earth.

CHAP. III.

THE BUILDING OF BABEL, AND CONFUSION OF TONGUES. BIRTH AND CALLING OF ABRAM. FIRST BATTLE. ABRAM RESCUES LOT. CIRCUMCISION INSTITUTED. GOD'S PROMISE IS RENEWED TO ABRAM, WHO IS NOW CALLED ABRAHAM.

THERE was as yet but one language used and known throughout the world; but the ſons of men greatly multiplying, they extended their habitations far and wide. Their chief place of reſidence is ſuppoſed to have been at the foot of the mountains of Armenia, but they now ſpread themſelves ſo far as Syria, and bending their courſe weſtward, ſome of them took their reſidence in the land of Shinar, ſituated on the banks of the Tigris, and comprehending the country of Eden, which was afterwards called Chaldea.

A ſtriking inſtance of the early power of ambition over the minds of mortals now preſents itſelf to our view; for thoſe new inhabitants had not long taken poſſeſſion of their reſpective places of abode, before they determined to render their name famous among future generations, by ſome monument that might command their admiration. To effect this, they agreed to build a ſtrong city, and a tower of ſuch monſtrous height, that its ſummit ſhould reach up to heaven. From its intended height, many have been led to think, that their deſign of erecting it aroſe not only from ambition, but alſo from fear, leſt they might be overwhelmed, by a ſecond deluge. Whatever was the motive, we are aſſured by the ſacred hiſtorian, that they ſet about the wild project, undismayed by the difficulty of the work, and began to make the materials, ſuch as brick, and a cement of ſlimy clay inſtead of mortar. They went on ſome time with the work; but the omniſcient Jehovah obſerved their doings, knew the pride and wickedneſs of their hearts, and determined to ſtop them in their ſinful career, in order to ſhew them, that weak mortals can never eſcape the power and juſtice of the Almighty.

When the Creator beheld the pride and vanity of theſe his creatures, he thus expoſtulates with himſelf, *behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do, (g) and now nothing will*

(g) *And now nothing will be reſtrained from them*, &c. The meaning of this expreſſion is, according to the beſt commentators, their hearts are now ſo hardened, and ſo regardleſs are they of any dependence on me, that they will believe themſelves omnipotent, and ſet at defiance my juſtice.

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be reſtrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their languoge, that they may not underſtand one another's ſpeech. The Almighty having thus resolved by the exertion of a miraculous power to frustrate the towering hopes of these aspiring mortals, so confounded their tongues, that a universal jargon ensued, and the different dialects caused such a distraction of thought, that incapable of understanding, or making known to each other their respective ideas; nothing prevailed but confusion and disorder, and they were thus forced to desist from their undertaking. By this awful stroke of divine justice, they were not only deprived of the power to proceed on their intended plan, but of one of the greatest pleasures of a social being, mutual converse, and agreeable intercourse. We are not to suppose, that each individual had a peculiar dialect or language, but only the several tribes or families, (computed to be seventy) who therefore dispersed, those of one language going one way, and those of another language bending their course another way. Two wise ends were answered by divine Providence, in this scattering abroad an united people; the first was the prevention of a wicked design, and the second, a more speedy and general increase of the inhabitants of the earth. The building which they began to erect, was called Babel, or Confusion, from the judgment that attended their rash and impious undertaking.

The family of the three sons of Noah, being thus scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, they settled in different parts of the world; some in Asia, some in Africa, and some in Europe, particularly those of the family of Japheth.

The Confusion of Tongues and dispersion of the family of Noah, happened just an hundred and one years after the flood, as is evident from the birth of Peleg, the son of Eber, who was great grandson to Shem, and born in the hundredth and first year after that memorable period.

The wise disposer of all events, having thus severely chastised the folly and presumption of mankind, and scattered them abroad over the face of the earth, that, disunited, they might not again attempt such complicated wickedness, as that of contending with his power, and questioning his truth, now reveals a dawn of his glorious design of choosing to himself a peculiar people, which should constitute the church of God, the company of the faithful in all ages that should endure for ever.

This was the birth of Abram, on which account the inspired penman gives a very precise account of the genealogy of Terah one of the descendants of Shem, because Terah was the father of Abram, afterwards called Abraham, who was honoured by God with being father of the faithful, or worshippers of the true God; though Terah his father was an idolater, according to the testimony of *Joſhua*, chap. xxiv. ver. 2.

Now Terah had three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram, who was the

youngest; Haran the eldest *(h)* died before his father, leaving behind him one son, named Lot, and two daughters, Milcah and Iscah, the latter of which was married to Abram, and called by the Jews *Sarai* for her beauty and domestic œconomy.

Soon after, his father Terah took Abram, his grandson Lot, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, from Ur, a city of the Chaldeans, to journey toward the land of Canaan, and taking up their abode at Haran, Terah died there by the way, in the two hundredth and fifth year of his age.

It is evident from the account of the inspired penman, that the Almighty had revealed himself to Abram, before his father's death; for, according to *Gen.* xxii. 1, *The Lord had said unto Abram*, &c. He had commanded him to leave the country in which he then resided, and travel to a country he would shew. He promised to make him father of a mighty people, and in him to bless all the nations on the earth.

Abram stedfastly believing the divine promise, though he knew not the difficulties that might attend his removal, nor even the country in which he was to settle; immediately on the decease of his father Terah, prepared for his journey, taking with him his nephew Lot, his wife Sarai, and the rest of his family, in order to go to the land which God might appoint; and by his strict attention to the divine command, prove at once his faith and obedience.

Accordingly he pursued his journey, till he arrived at the land of Canaan (the place appointed by the divine decree;) and that part of it which is called the *(i)* Oak of Moreh.

On his arrival at this place, the Lord appeared to Abram again, repeating the promise he had before made to him, viz. that his posterity should inherit the land, though he had no issue as yet, and it was still possessed by others; for the sacred historian writes, that THE CANAANITE WAS THEN IN THE LAND.

The heart of pious Abram was affected with the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord, and in the fullness of his soul he there erected an altar to the God of all his mercies. From thence he removed to a mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai, where he likewise erected an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of his God.

He was soon compelled to remove from Canaan, a famine happening in that country; taking with him therefore his family, he set out on a journey to Egypt, determining to remain there, till God in the course of his Providence should call him thence. It appears from the following history, that Abram had observed, on his entry into these parts, the difference of

(*h*) *Died*, &c. It is observable that this Haran, was the first son, of whom we have any account, that died in a natural way before his father; before this instance those, who were born first, died first.

(*i*) *Oak*, &c. This in our translation, is rendered PLAIN, but the Septuagint and most other versions, has it Oak. But we shall treat more largely on the subject, when we come to consider the Oak of MAMRE.

their

their women, in point of shape, and complexion, from those of his own country, and especially his wife Sarai, who was remarkably beautiful: fearing therefore she might attract the desire of some of the great men amongst them and thereby endanger his safety, (his fear suggesting to his imagination, that if they found Sarai was his wife they would dispatch him, in order to pave the way for the enjoyment of her) to prevent so dreadful a catastrophe he made his wife acquainted with his jealous fear, and desired her to pass for his sister, in order to avoid the danger, and for her sake, be more generally respected in a strange country. Nor was Abram's fear without foundation; for they no sooner entered the land of Egypt, than the inhabitants were captivated with the charms of his wife, who in a short time became so celebrated amongst them, that her fame reached the ears of the king, by whom she was sent for to court, and treated with the highest honours; and Abram, for calling her sister, met with the kindest reception.

The interposition of divine Providence, to preserve inviolate the honour of the Patriarch, and the chastity of his wife, is very remarkable; for to keep in due bounds the desires of *(k)* Pharaoh, and his courtiers, God brought upon them divers diseases, and bodily infirmities; and by that means caused them to suspect her to be a married woman.

The king, strongly impressed by so remarkable a circumstance, sent for Abram, and upbraided him with spreading a false report, which might have occasioned him to have attempted the violation of his wife's chastity; and in an angry tone commanded him speedily to depart with her on pain of incurring his farther displeasure. However, he permitted him to remove without sustaining the least loss or detriment in his substance, which was very considerable, having received from the king very considerable presents, both in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

Lot also had now acquired considerable property; but, as his uncle Abram was under a necessity of departing for Egypt, he accompanied him, not chusing to remain in a strange country without so valuable a friend and companion.

On their departure from Egypt, they made towards Bethel, where Abram had before erected an altar to the Lord, and now paid his vows to the Most High again.

The families and possessions both of Abram and Lot being greatly multiplied, they frequently were in want of sufficiency of provision, for their cattle in particular, which want most probably arose from the late famine that happened there, and the great number of Canaanitish inhabitants, who possessed the more fertile parts of the land. This want of pasture-ground produced much dispute between the herdsmen of Abram, and those of Lot, insomuch, that Abram

(k) *Pharaoh*, &c. Pharaoh was the common name of the Egyptian kings, and was a title of dignity, like that of Cæsar, assumed by the Roman emperors.

fearing

fearing that the contention which prevailed between their servants might end in a rupture between themselves, reasoned with his kinsman Lot on the subject, mildly addressing him in these terms; *let there be no ſtrife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdſmen, and thy herdſmen; for we be (l) Brethren.*

To prevent any disagreeable conſequence that might arise from their continuance together on the same spot, Abram wisely proposed a separation, as he was convinced there was not sufficient accommodation for them both, their substance being so prodigiously increased.

Such was the prudence and condeſcension of Abram, that though superior in every reſpect to Lot, he humbly offers him his choice of settlement in any part that should appear most eligible to him, and he himself would take the refuse; *If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

Lot soon acceded to so advantageous a proposal; and having first taken a view of the country, and beheld that the plain of *Jordan* was very fruitful and well watered; he made choice of that as his spot of residence.

Having separated themselves by mutual consent, Lot directed his course towards the east, and fixed his abode in the plain of Jordan, pitching his tents towards *Sodom*, the inhabitants of which were in those days notorious for the most abominable of crimes.

Lot had no sooner departed, than the Almighty, ever mindful of his faithful servant Abram, again called him, renewing the promise he had made to him before. There is a peculiar beauty and simplicity in the style and manner, in which the sacred Historian records this gift of God to our father Abram. *Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and ſouthward, and eaſtward and weſtward. For all the land which thou ſeeſt, to thee will I give it, and to thy ſeed for ever. And I will make thy ſeed as the duſt of the earth, ſo that if a man can number the duſt of the earth, then ſhall thy ſeed alſo be numbered. Ariſe, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.*

The Patriarch then removed his tent, and fixed his habitation, near the (m) Oak of *Mamre*, which is in *Hebron*, and, according to his usual custom whenever he pitched his tent

(l) *Brethren.* So the Eastern nations called those that sprang from one common root, though not in a direct line, begotten by one and the same father. In this respect these were brethren in a natural relation; as with respect to religion, and the worship of the true God, they were brethren likewise in a spiritual relation.

(m) Oak of *Mamre*, &c. This in most Versions, as well as that of the plain of *Moreh*, is rendered Oak. *Euſebius* observes that this Oak was famous in the time of *Conſtantine* for pilgrimages, and for the anniversary Feast, which was solemnized there: that it was distant from *Hebron* but six miles, where there were still to be seen some cottages, which Abram had built near to that Oak, and a Well which he had digged, and whither the Jews, Pagans, and Christians, travelled every year, either out of devotion or a design to trade. *Epiphanius* also tells us, that he saw it, and carried home some of the fruit and wood of it; but the most probable opinion is, that there were many oaks in this Plain, although only one is mentioned.

upon

upon a new spot, erected an altar for the worship of his God.

Soon after the removal of Abram to the Oak of *Mamre*, happened the first pitched battle recorded in sacred history. Four kings were engaged against five on the following occasion. *Chedorlaomar*, king of *Elam*, held five petty kings in tributary subjection to him. These, in process of time, desirous of throwing off the yoke, determined to unite their forces against him.

Chedorlaomer, hearing of this combination, in conjunction with three other kings, proclaimed war against them, in order to reduce them to their former subjection. A pitched battle ensued, and the tributary kings being defeated, each of them betook himself to flight. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, in their flight, are said to have fallen in the vale of Siddim, which was full of pits, containing great quantities of slimy dirt or clay. Whether they where pursued to those pits, and there slain by their victorious enemies; or whether they betook themselves there for the sake of shelter is not expressed by the sacred penman; but we are informed that the conquerors plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, made Lot, Abram's kinsman, prisoner amongst the rest, and seized on all his possessions.

One of the inhabitants that escaped informed Abram of the defeat, and of the hapless fate of his kinsman Lot; the patriarch then dwelt at the Oak of Mamre, with Eshcol and Aner, who were brothers and associates with him. The faithful Abram, no sooner heard of what had befallen his kinsman, than he levied his utmost force to his rescue, armed all his own servants who were fit to bear arms, to the amount of three hundred and eighteen, and accompanied by his associates Eshcol and Aner pursued the spoilers as far as *Dan*.

Availing himself of the covert of the night, he put his forces into proper disposition, and attacked them on all quarters with the utmost vehemence. So sudden and vigorous an attempt on an army fatigued with a late engagement, and revelling in the spoils of conquest, had the desired effect, for Abram obtained a complete victory. Chedorlaomer, who exacted the tribute from the inhabitants of Sodom, among the rest was slain, and his whole army routed, and pursued by Abram's victorious party as far as *Hobah*, which is to the left of *Damascus*. Thus did Abram rescue the person and property of his nephew Lot, together with his whole household.

Having thus signalized both his valour and fidelity, he was highly caressed by those whose cause he had so gallantly espoused. Among the first was the king of Sodom, who, in token of the grateful sense he retained of the Patriarch's important services, offered him as the reward of his valour the goods he had rescued, desiring him only to restore the prisoners. But Abram's righteous soul disdained to take advantage of the unfortunate: for, reserving to his associates that part of the plunder, to which their services, according to the rules of war, entitled them, he restored to the king both his subjects and property;

evincing throughout the whole of the proceeding the most disinterested fidelity, intrepid courage, and inflexible justice. The next by whom Abram was honoured for his laudable conduct, was (*n*) *Melchizedec*, king of *Salem*, who met him on his return from the victory, presented him with bread and wine for his refreshment, and blessed Abram, and the God of Abram, through whose omnipotent arm he had gained so important a victory.

As a return for this grateful behaviour, the victorious Patriarch presented Melchizedec with a tenth part of the spoils he had taken in the expedition.

As Abram had now acted in the public capacity of a warrior, and might reasonably expect that the kings whom he had lately routed, would recruit their scattered forces, and prepare for a second attack, the Almighty, to fortify his mind against all fear, from the most potent princes of the earth, informs him in a vision, that he had undertaken his defence, and would ever reward his faithfulness: *Fear not Abram, I am thy ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward.* It appears from the result, that, notwithstanding God had promised to Abram that his seed should inherit the land; his present want of issue gave him some concern: he therefore takes this opportunity of distantly hinting the promise; and reminding his maker that he had not hitherto been pleased to bestow an heir upon him: but that his servant was like to inherit his estate. The Lord, to clear up his doubts, and solve the perplexities which troubled his mind, tells him, that not his servant, but one that should proceed from his own bowels should be his heir, and that he should not only have heirs from his own body, but a numerous progeny, equal in number to the stars of heaven. But such was the anxiety of the Patriarch, that he desired some striking mark of the divine promise, *Take, therefore,* said the Lord, *an heifer of three years old, and a ſhe-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.*

Abram obeyed the command of the Lord, and dividing the beasts, but not the birds, laid each piece upon the other, and when the fowls came upon the carcases he drove them away. About the time of sun-set, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and he was seized with surprize on account of this prediction from the Almighty. *Know of a ſurety that thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land that is not theirs, and ſhall ſerve them, and they ſhall afflict them four hundred years. And alſo that nation whom thou ſhalt*

(*n*) There have been, and still are, various opinions, concerning the person and character of this *Melchizedech*. Several of the Fathers took him for the Son of God, who appeared to Abram in the form of a man; but how could the Son of God be a type of himself, as the Apoſtle plainly tells us, Melchizedec was a type of Christ.—*Heb.* vii. 3. The most rational opinion is, that he was one of the Princes of *Canaan*, and perhaps the only one who preserved the worship of the True God, after all around him were sunk into the grossest idolatry. His name in Hebrew signifies King of Peace, but some ancient copies have it peaceful Kings.

ſerve

ſerve will I judge, and afterward ſhall they come out with great ſubſtance. And thou ſhalt go to thy father in peace, thou ſhalt be buried in a good old age, but in the fourth generation they ſhall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is not yet full.*

To give him aſſurance of the exact accompliſhment of this promiſe, God cauſed a ſmoaking furnace and a burning lamp to appear, (*o*) which paſſed between the divided pieces of flesh. Thus was the Almighty pleaſed to ratify his covenant with his choſen people; and having inſtructed Abram their father in the various fortunes of his deſcendants, particularly marks out the bounds of the promiſed land, and reckons up the ſeveral nations that inhabited it. *Unto thy ſeed have I given this land from the river of Egypt*, &c. Gen. xv. 18, 19, &c.

Sarai being now ſtricken in years, and having waited the fulfilment of the divine promiſe about the ſpace of ten years, inſomuch that ſhe began to deſpair from the courſe of nature of raiſing up ſeed to her huſband, importuned him to take her handmaid *Hagar* to be his (*p*) concubinary wife, hoping that ſhe might conceive by him, and it would be a means of perpetuating their family, and promoting the accompliſhment of the divine promiſe.

Abram, at the ſolicitation of Sarai, took Hagar to his bed; and, when ſhe found that ſhe had conceived, ſhe began to behave inſolently towards her miſtreſs, who was much affected with the ſcorn and ingratitude of an Egyptian, to whoſe advancement ſhe had ſolely contributed; and therefore warmly expoſtulates with her huſband on the unworthy treatment ſhe had met with from her handmaid, intimating that his fondneſs of her might not a little encourage her in the ſame. But the honeſt Patriarch, juſt in all his dealings, and true to every alliance, would by no means countenance the leaſt mark of diſreſpect in Hagar towards her miſtreſs; and, to avoid every ſuſpicion, wholly reſigns her to her diſpoſal. *Behold, the maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaſeth thee.*

We find from the reſult, that Sarai reſented the injury ſhe had ſuſtained; for, no ſooner was Hagar thus delivered up to the will and pleaſure of her miſtreſs, than to avoid her ſeverity, ſhe fled away and bent her courſe towards her native country.

In her journey through the deſarts, ſhe ſtopped at a fountain of water in order to partake of its cooling refreſhment, and reſt her limbs wearied with travelling. Here ſhe was accoſted by a heavenly meſſenger, who, to impreſs her mind with a due ſenſe of her former ſtation and duty, emphatically calls her, Sarai's maid; intimating thereby, that though ſhe was admitted

(*o*) The Hebrew word *Berith* ſignifies to divide or cut aſunder, and the ſame word is uſed for a covenant, alluding to Chriſt the mediator of the New Covenant, who was cut off for his people.

And as almoſt every thing in the Old Teſtament is typical of the Goſpel, God took this method, to point out to him the future ſufferings of Chriſt, and the everlaſting ſtability of his covenant.

(*p*) In concubinage, thoſe ſecondary or ſubordinate wives were deemed lawful, and their offſpring legitimate, but in all other reſpects they were inferior to the firſt and principal. So that as they had no ſhare in domeſtic affairs before

mitted to her master's bed, she was as indispensibly subject to the will of her mistress as ever, and therefore highly culpable in neglecting the obedience she still owed her.

When the Angel enquired of her the cause of her departure, and the place of her destiny, she informed him, that she fled from the face of her angered mistress; upon which, without making any farther remarks, he commanded her immediately to return to her master's house, and to her former obedience to her mistress.

However, to encourage her in the prosecution of her duty, he assured her, that her seed should be exceedingly multiplied: and, to convince her of the divinity of his mission, not only acquainted her, that he knew of her conception, which was not yet discoverable to the sight, but gave her precise directions, with respect to the naming of the child she then conceived, a circumstance of great consequence, and one of the principal superstitions of the *Egyptians*. *Thou ſhalt call his name* Ishmael, *becauſe the Lord hath heard thy affliction.*

It appears, that though Hagar was an Egyptian, she had imbibed from Abram just notions of the true God, and of the worship due to him from his creatures, as well as the immediate interposition of his providence on particular occasions, for the well was called, *Beer-la-hai-roi*, that is, *the well of the living viſion*, or *the well of him that liveth and ſeeth me.*

Being thus admonished and encouraged by the heavenly messenger, she returned to her former service, submitted herself to her mistress, and was kindly received.

In due time she was delivered of a son, whom Abram, according to the Angel's direction, called Ishmael.

Abram being now eighty-six years old, it pleased God, lest in his extreme joy he should deem the child of his handmaid, the earnest of the fulfilment of the great promises that God had made him, to defer the blessing yet thirteen years longer; for when he was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared unto him, and thus spake: *I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my Covenant between me and thee, and will mutiply thee exceedingly.* Struck with the solemn, yet gracious address, the patriarch fell prostrate before his God, when the Lord was pleased to resume his discourse; and, as a farther confirmation of the respect he bore unto him, changed his name from *Abram* to *(q) Abraham.*

To ratify the covenant thus solemnly made, God was pleased to institute the rite of circumcision, as a seal or pledge of the same, commanding that every male child, of eight days old, whether born in the house, or bought with money, should be circumcised in the fore skin of his flesh, on pain of being cut off from the covenant, and deemed an alien from the common-wealth of Israel.

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before they were concubines, neither had they afterwards, but were in every respect subject to their mistresses.

(q) Abram. Signifies the father of a family; but his new name, *Abraham*, signifies, *a Father of a great multitude*, as he certainly was, according to the divine promise, *Gen.* xvii. 5. *a Father of many nations have I made thee.*

Accord-

Accordingly, Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all that were bought with his money, even every male in his house, the very day in which God commanded him, and performed on them the rite of circumcision.

Having changed the name of Abram into that of Abraham, it seemed meet unto divine wisdom, to change the name of his wife from (r) *Sarai* to *Sarah*, promising at the same time by her to raise up seed to his faithful servant.

CHAP. IV.

ABRAHAM ENTERTAINS THREE ANGELS. INTERCEDES WITH GOD IN BEHALF OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH. DREADFUL JUDGMENT INFLICTED ON LOT'S WIFE. DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH. LOT'S INCEST. BIRTH OF ISAAC, AND REJECTION OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL. ABRAHAM's COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH. ABRAHAM OFFERS UP HIS SON ISAAC AT THE DIVINE COMMAND.

NOT-withstanding the exceeding joy which Abraham received from the promise of an heir from the body of his wife Sarah; his parental affection for Ishmael, his first-born, and suspicion that on the birth of a child by a free-woman, he might be deprived of that descended from the bond-woman, caused him most cordially to cry out, *O that* Ishmael *might live before thee!*

The Lord, therefore in his infinite goodness soon cleared up his doubt, and to prevent his thinking that *Ishmael had any ſhare* in the covenant established between them, assured him, that is wife Sarah should conceive and bare him a son, through whose loins the promise should be fulfilled, though at the same time he had favourable respect unto Ishmael. *As for Iſhmael, I have heard thee; behold I have bleſſed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes ſhall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.*

But farther, to strengthen his faith in God's promise, the precise time of which Sarah should bear a son is mentioned, which was the very next (s) year; and lest he should admit the least doubt of the precise accomplishment of the long desired event, God appeared to him in a different shape, as a farther confirmation of the truth of his word.

As the patriarch was one day at his tent door, for the benefit of the air, he espied three persons, whom he took for men, coming towards him; and, according to the custom of those times, rose from his seat, ran to meet them, and saluted them by bowing himself towards the ground. Still imagining them to be some of the descendants of Adam, liable to

(r) *Sarai.* The word Sarai, signifies, my princess, or chief of my family only; but Sarah signifies, Princess or chief of multitudes, according to Gen. xvii. 16. She shall be a mother of nations, kings of people shall be of her.

(s) See Gen. xvii. 21.

fatigue, and therefore desirous of refreshment, he importunes them to stay and partake of whatever his habitation afforded, before they pursued their journey.

On their accepting his invitaton, necessary preparations were made for their entertainment, at which the Patriarch attended in person. In the course of their conversation, one of them enquired concerning his wife, and on his informing him, that she was in the tent, to his surprize and astonishment thus bespoke him, *I will certainly return unto her, according to the time of life, and lo Sarah, thy wife, ſhall have a ſon.* By this Abraham was convinced beyond doubt, that these three visitants were messengers from heaven, and that one of them was the peculiar representative of the Almighty. Sarah had listened attentively to the discourse that passed between her husband, and his strange guests; but considering the advanced age both of herself and her husband, she regarded not their prediction, esteeming the common order of nature rather than the infallible promise of the God of Truth and Omnipotence, and even laughed within herself at the improbability of such an event. Tho' this impious behaviour was severely reprimanded by the divine messenger, yet she denied that she had laughed; till it was positively fixed upon her, in these words, *Nay, but thou didſt laugh.*

This finished the converse, the strangers prepared to depart, and the Patriarch, finding they intended to go towards *Sodom*, accompanied them on their way. As they journied together, God was pleased to manifest his peculiar regard to Abraham in foretelling the dreadful judgment he intended to inflict upon Sodom, which instance of his kindness was founded upon an assurance that Abraham would command not only his children, but his houshold after him, to persevere in the true fear and worship of God.

While the Lord was relating his design upon the city of abomination, the two angels departed and proceeded towards the same; but Abraham continued in converse with the Lord, and even ventured from an assurance of the divine favour to intercede for that wicked city. Imagining the supreme and equitable Judge of the earth would do right; the Patriarch mediates for Sodom, in six petitionary propositions, lessening the supposed number of pious inhabitants from fifty to ten; that even on their account the Lord would withdraw his avenging rod and avert the impending danger: This request was granted by his Creator to the Father of the Faithful, who returned home abundantly satisfied with such peculiar tokens of the divine love. The other two guests, who set out from the tent of Abraham, pursued their journey towards Sodom, and arrived there in the evening. Righteous Lot, who sat in the gate of the City, hastily rose up to meet them, and, having saluted them in the usual manner, invited them to refresh and repose themselves that night with him.

The benevolence and hospitality of Lot are remarkable in the importunities

tunities which he used to the Angels, especially as he was then settled among a people, who were insolent on account of their wealth, void of humanity towards men, or piety towards God, strangers to hospitality, and lost to every principle of goodness. Amidst this sink of vice Lot remained untainted, and seems to have rivalled the hospitality of his uncle Abraham.

Such was his importunity, that the divine messengers were prevailed upon to accept the invitation: but before they retired to rest, many of the vile inhabitants of that corrupted city encompassed the house of Lot, commanding him, on pain of sustaining much damage, to bring out the strangers which sojourned with them, that they might *(t)* know them.

The poor old man at first endeavoured, by gentle means, to quell the outrage, desiring them to suffer the strangers to remain in his house unmolested; as they had committed themselves to his care and protection; nay, so great was his concern for the safety and honour of his guests, that to appease the insatiable lust of the Sodomites, he even made an unjustifiable proffer of his two virgin daughters, which, though undoubtedly an error in Lot, demonstrates how inviolably sacred the laws of hospitality were held in those days amongst the just and good. But the Sodomites were so abandoned to wickedness, and so deaf to every remonstrance of reason, justice, and virtue, that they freed him from the disagreeable necessity of exposing his daughters, tho' he was determined not to give up his guests; commanding him to *ſtand back*, and remain quiet, remembering that he was but a sojourner among them, and therefore not intitled to direct their conduct and behaviour, and threatening him moreover with very rigorous treatment, if he presumed any farther to interrupt them.

Finding all their threatenings ineffectual, they determined to effect that by force, which they could not by fear; and, pressing hard, attempted to break the door; but the divine messengers prevented their iniquitous design, by pulling Lot into the house, shutting the door, and through an exertion of supernatural power, bringing on the rioters a temporary blindness, insomuch that they departed, being rendered incapable of finding out the house.

When they had an opportunity of conversing, without interruption, the heavenly guests enquired of their host concerning his family, assuring him, that the Almighty had determined to destroy that abominable city; and admonishing him immediately to remove from thence, with his whole family, and all his possessions.

Thus warned, Lot informed those who were betrothed to his daughters, of the awful event, that so nearly ap-

(*t*) *Know*, &c. That is, abuse them in that unnatural and detestable manner, which was expressly forbidden in the law, *Levit.* xviii. 22. and there made capital, chapter xx. 13. This abominable practice prevailed among the Gentiles even in the time of the Apostles, as we learn from *Rom.* i. 17. It is still called Sodomy, because so generally practised by the people of Sodom, and is yet by our *Engliſh* laws punishable with death.

proached,

proached, advising them to go with him, and so avoid the general ruin; but they derided the counsel he gave them, and were involved in the common destruction.

As soon as the earliest dawn of the ensuing day appeared, the heavenly messengers hastened the departure of Lot; saying, *Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters, which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.* The good man rather lingered, hoping the sentence against this wretched people might be revoked; but his delay was vain, for instead of ten righteous, that Abraham had capitulated for; no more than four, and all these of Lot's family (himself included) were appointed to escape the dreadful judgment, ready to be executed on this abominable race: knowing therefore the necessity of immediate departure, the Angels took him, his wife, and two daughters, by force, and brought them out of the city; and bid them hasten for their lives, nor look back, nor stay upon the plain, lest they were consumed with this wicked people.

Lot finding the mountain to which he was warned to escape was very remote, intreated of the Angels, that they might be permitted to direct their course to a little adjacent city which was then called *(u) Bela*, but afterwards *Zoar*, or the LITTLE CITY. Lot's request was granted by the Angels, who commanded him to hasten thither, adding as an encouragement, *I cannot do any thing, till thou be come thither.*

Lot, his wife, and daughters, were particularly warned from looking back, and enjoined by every means to hasten their escape; yet before they reached Zoar, the city of refuge, his wife, prompted by some fatal curiosity, looked back, was turned into a pillar of *(w)* Salt, and became a standing monument of God's vengeance on obstinate offenders and the flagrant disobedience of a positive command. Lot and his daughters, however, proceeded on their journey according to the divine command, and arrived at the city of Zoar, by sun-rise. And now the Almighty arm of an incensed God, prepares the awful judgment ready to be executed against Sodom, Gomorrah, and the rest of the sinful cities of the plain. Showers of liquid fire instantaneously fall, and the guilty wretches are consumed in a moment.

Lot, observing the calamity of the other cities, and doubting his safety in Zoar, withdrew with his two daughters to the mountains, and there dwelt with them in a cave. In this retirement happened a most melan-

(u) *Bela.* This city was the residence of one of the five tributary kings, who fought with the four kings, and were driven into the vale of Siddim.

(w) *Salt*, &c. To anticipate the ridicule of the Atheist and Libertine, we observe in this place; that the Salt into which the wife of Lot was turned, was not of the common, but Metallic kind, which was hewn out of the rocks, like marble, and used to build houses, according to the testimony of several eminent writers. From hence this expression has been taken in a metaphorical sense, as a firm and sure Covenant is called a Covenant of Salt, *Num.* xviii. 19. From the durableness of its nature: the word, Metallic should indeed have been added in our translation.

choly

choly event, which doubtless grieved the righteous soul of Lot: this was the commission of a crime no less flagrant than incest; for, his two daughters, having lost their husbands in the destruction of Sodom, and despairing of having any others (for they thought the late conflagration had extended to the whole human race, excepting their own family) agreed upon a scheme to seduce their innocent father, in order to preserve the race of mankind. Whatever might be their motive, it is a melancholy truth, that they had a most wicked and unnatural design upon their father, and as they knew from his virtuous disposition, that so long as he retained his reason, they could not obtain the same; they resolved to draw him in to drink insensibly; till his sense was impaired, though not his strength.

The eldest daughter, who was most forward in promoting the impious design, persuaded the old man, under pretence of recruiting his spirits after the late alarming circumstance, to drink till he became stupified, and having put him to rest, went to bed to him, where having perpetrated the horrid incest, she rose again, without the old man's perceiving when she arose and when she lay down.

The following night, the youngest daughter, at the example and instigation of her sister, committed the same detestable offence, and arose in the same manner, unperceived by her father.

They both conceived from the incestuous congress; and Lot became, from the vicious plot of his children, both father and grand-father, to the shameful progeny: but justly shocked at the unnatural and sinful commerce, we do not find that he so much as gave them a name; for they were named by the mothers, (a very uncommon practice in those days) the eldest daughter called her son *Moab*, and the youngest named her's *Bem-ammi*: they both proved, in process of time, inveterate enemies to the *Israelites*, particularly the race of the former.

As sacred history is silent, after this black circumstance, concerning the transactions of Lot, we proceed to consider the peculiar dealings of Providence with that eminent servant of God, Abraham.

The pious Patriarch abode in Mamre, till he had been eye-witness to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; after which awful dispensation of divine Providence, he removed from thence to the Southward, and took up his abode in *Gerar*, the chief city of *Paleſtine*.

Here the Patriarch had recourse to the same policy, which he practised before, and an agreement passed between him and his wife, that they should call each brother and sister. The *(x)* king of Gerar, supposing that was the alliance between them, caused Sarah to be taken from Abraham, intending to take her for his concubine; but the Almighty warned

(x) These kings were generally called by the title of Abimelech, as those of Egypt were called by that of Pharaoh.

him in a dream from committing the iniquitous act, by assuring him that death would be the penalty of taking to his bed a woman whose husband was a Prophet.

Abimelech alledged in vindication of his design, that Abraham had given out, that the woman was his sister, and sending for the Patriarch, reprimanded him very severely for imposing on him, who had treated him with the kindest offices of friendship.

Abraham plainly told him, he made the report to save his life, fearing he might be slain for the sake of his wife, though he had not lied in the same, for she was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother. As Abimelech had experienced the divine interposition in the behalf of Abraham, his anger soon subsided; and, to assure the Patriarch of the continuance of his favour, he restored to him his wife, with very valuable presents, and gave him full liberty of settling in any part of his country he might choose as the most agreeable residence.

He likewise did peculiar honour to Sarah in these words: *Behold I have given to thy Brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee; and with all other: thus she was (y) reproved, or* rather *justified.*

God had not only awed the king from sinful commerce with Sarah by a dream, but also by afflicting him with a kind of impotence; but now, at the intercession of Abraham, his health and fertility were happily restored.

The long expected promise was now fulfilled to the waiting Patriarch, who was blessed with the sight of an heir from the body of Sarah his wife, though they were both advanced in years.

Whatever eternal truth hath said, Almighty power is concerned to execute: God had said it, and behold! Sarah is delivered of a son, who is called by his father according to former directions *(z) Isaac*, and, in obedience to the divine command, circumcised when he was eight days old.

It is difficult to conceive the joy of the aged pair on this auspicious event; greatly did they rejoice in experiencing that the promises of God were all *Yea*, and *Amen*. Now might Sarah laugh with joy, and not with distrust as she had done before. As the birth of Isaac was cause of exceeding consolation to Sarah, so on the other hand, it could not fail of being matter of disgust to Hagar, who from the advanced age of her mistress had most probably flattered herself, that her son should be honoured with being her master's heir.

(y) Reproved. There is here a most flagrant error in our translation. The word rendered reproved, never has that meaning; but signifies to search or enquire into a thing, till it is cleared, and put beyond a doubt. Besides Reproof, in this case, would have been very absurd, for Abraham had already justified Sarah. It should therefore be rendered *justified;* the design of Abimelech, by his bounty, being to justify Sarah's virtue, it being the custom in those days, to confirm the truth of any thing that had been doubtful by presents, see *Gen.* xxi. and xxx.

(z) Isaac, this word signifies Laughter.

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The mother and son could not long stifle the resentment of so affecting a disappointment; for soon after Isaac was weaned, his mother detected Ishmael in mocking him, or treating him with derision and ridicule. Incensed that so flagrant an insult should be offered her son by the child of a bond-woman, Sarah importuned her husband to turn Hagar and her son out of his habitation, intimating that the son of a slave had no title to heir-ship, which solely belonged to her son Isaac.

The good old Patriarch was brought to a very intricate situation, and from the love he bore to Ishmael undetermined how to proceed; but that gracious God who had directed him in every important case, soon confirmed his resolution. *Let it not be grievous in thy ſight, becauſe of the lad, and becauſe of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath ſaid unto thee, hearken unto her voice, for in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called. And alſo of the ſon of the bond-woman will I make a nation, becauſe he is of thy ſeed.*

Thus determined by the divine appointment, Hagar once more becomes a wanderer, nor could the fondness of Abraham for her son Ishmael prevent her fate; it was the Lord's command, nor durst the Patriarch refuse to obey, but, having supplied her with some bread and a bottle of water, he dismissed her, and she wandered about in the deserts of Beer-sheba.

When her bottle was empty, and she had long rambled in vain, seeking water in a parched country to allay the thirst of her perishing child, she placed him at the foot of a tree, and went herself and sat down at a considerable distance, that she might not behold the dying pangs of her beloved Ishmael.

A melancholy scene ensued; the feeble tongue of the child begged relief from the tender mother whose woes were doubled by the want of power; his pressing demands could only be answered by her gushing tears, and they had no other prospect before them than despair and death. But the ears of boundless mercy are ever open to the cries of distress; and the hand of bounty is ever ready to dispense aid to the indigent; for in this most desperate situation, the Lord heard, the Lord pitied, the Lord relieved. A cheering promise was given to the fainting handmaid and a well of water supplied for the refreshment of the expiring child.

The mother and son afterwards took up their abode in the wilderness of Paran, where the Lord blessed them; and Ishmael, becoming an expert archer, furnished both himself and mother with necessary provisions. When he arrived to years of maturity, his mother, being an Egyptian, took him a wife out of her native country.

Abraham, having received so many tokens of respect at the hands of Abimelech, accepts of the invitation to reside in his country; and the king observing the success with which it pleased God to crown all the undertakings of the pious Patriarch, who now became very powerful; and fearing lest, in future time, his influence should become so great as to endanger the security of his crown, at the instigation of Phicol, the General of

all

all his forces, he entered into a league of friendship with Abraham.

The treaty being made and confirmed by an oath, and a difference composed concerning a well of water, which Abraham had digged, and Abimelech's servants without the knowledge of their master, had forcibly seized (but now, on the Patriarch's complaint was restored to him); Abraham, as a token of friendship, presented some sheep and oxen to Abimelech, who, with his General, took leave and returned to his court, while the Patriarch planted a (*a*) Grove, in Beer-sheba and called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

The Lord, in his wise providence had already, in divers instances, and on many occasions, put Abraham's faith and obedience to the test; but now he tries him in the tenderest point, a point in which every tie of parental affection bound him, and to give up which, required a degree of resignation, uncommon to the best of men. He is required, by his God, to sacrifice his son, to imbrue his hands in the blood of a darling child.

Ishmael was now to him no more; he had parted with him at the divine command, and transferred his affection wholly to Isaac; and this son, this only son, who had been given him by divine promise, and the ground of his future expectation, must fall a victim, by the unalterable decree of heaven. Hard task to flesh and blood! Severe trial to human nature! But if the flesh shuddered, the spirit was resolute; God commands, the Patriarch obeys.

Without hesitation or the least delay, he rose early in the morning, and proceeded towards the place appointed by the Lord, which was the land of (*b*) Moriah, accompanied only by his son Isaac, and attended by two servants, who led an ass, that carried the provisions, together with the wood, instruments, and other things necessary for the sacrifice. On the third day's journey, they came within sight of the place; when Abraham ordered his servants to stop with the ass, while he and the lad went in further to worship; which done, they would return to them again.

The harmless Isaac, ignorant of the design of his pious and affectionate parent, went on cheerfully with him and the good old Patriarch, relying on the faithfulness of the divine promise, overcame the strugglings of natural affection, that might have retarded his compliance with the will of God, and proceeded with a resolution worthy the Father of the Faithful.

Thus advanced the father and son to execute a most awful injunction; but, as they approached the appointed place, the lad, observing that a lamb the most essential requisite for the sacrifice was wanting, innocently en-

(*a*) *Grove.* Though this grove was planted from force of custom and example, it being the universal practice of the heathens to plant groves, and therein set up their idols and altars; yet Abraham followed not their idolatry, but called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

(*b*) *Moriah.* That is the Land of Vision, according to many interpreters, and shews that the words of our Lord, "Abraham saw my day," alludes to this extraordinary circumstance.

quired

quired of his father, where was the Lamb for a burnt offering; This enquiry could not but touch the affectionate parent in the most tender part, as it at once indicated the innocence and piety of the child: Nevertheless, behold his reliance even yet on the faithfulness of an immutable God! *My son, God will provide himself a Lamb for the Burnt-offering.*

Being now arrived at the place of which God had told him, he built an altar, and having prepared the instruments, and laid the wood in order, embraced his son, and then bound him. The sacred Historian, like a great painter, had drawn a veil over the sorrows of Abraham, and the resignation of Isaac, that the imagination of the reader might paint to him more forcibly, the struggles of the parent and the agonies of the son, than words can possibly express. Isaac was at this period about twenty-five years of age, and his father enfeebled with years; his resignation therefore must certainly have been (*c*) voluntary.

Every preparation being now made, Abraham stretched forth his hand to give the finishing stroke to the life of his child, when, behold! God is satisfied with the faith and obedience of the father, and the piety and resignation of the son; a heavenly messenger is dispatched to avert the fatal blow, and to assure the Patriarch, that God had accepted this act of obedience as the strongest testimony of his faith and fear. *And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of Heaven, and said,* Abraham, Abraham; *and he said here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the Lad; neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*

The obedient Patriarch had no sooner taken off his eyes from the dear though intended victim, than he beheld a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, which, as the gracious substitute of Providence, he immediately took and offered for a burnt-offering, instead of his beloved son.

On this infallible token of Abraham's obedience, the Lord was pleased to renew his gracious promise to him with enlarged abundance, and even to confirm the same by a most solemn oath: *By myself have I sworn,* &c.

Having thus conformed to the divine will, and received a most convincing testimony of the divine approbation; Abraham and his son returned to his servants, and they went joyfully together to Beer-sheba, the place of his residence; whither, on his arrival, he was saluted with the welcome news of the increase of his Family; for Milcah, the wife of his brother Nahor, had born Rebecca, who was afterwards wife to his son Isaac.

(*c*) *Voluntary.* A strong and exact type of our blessed Redeemer, who *voluntarily* laid down his life for us; though no one could otherwise take it from him.

CHAP. V.

DEATH OF SARAH. ABRAHAM PURCHASES A BURIAL-PLACE. PROCURES REBECCA AS WIFE FOR HIS SON ISAAC. DEATH OF ABRAHAM. BIRTH OF ESAU AND JACOB. ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTH-RIGHT.

THE Sacred Historian is silent with respect to the time that Abraham abode at Beer-sheba; but informs us, that he afterwards resided at *Kirjath-arba*, where he buried his wife Sarah, who paid the debt of nature, in the hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age.

Having observed the funeral ceremonies for his wife, he applied to the (*d*) Hittites for a place to bury his Dead. The Hittites paying a deference to the Patriarch, who was a mighty man, and highly favoured by Providence, gave him the choice of their sepulchres for that necessary purpose.

Abraham acknowledged the favour, by bowing himself to the people of the land; but, as his race was a peculiar generation, distinguished by God from all other nations, and therefore it was not lawful for them to mix with any other, he proposed to buy a piece of ground for a separate sepulchre for him and his family, and therefore desired them to intreat Epron, the prince of the country, to sell him the cave of Macpelah, offering for it's utmost value.

Application being made to Ephron, he generously offered the Patriarch not only the Cave, but the whole field, as a Burying-Place. Abraham acknowledged the bounty of the offer; but, as he had ever acted on a principle of strict justice, he desired the Prince to fix a price upon the field; and that on such condition he would take possession of it for the purpose proposed.

The prince, finding the Patriarch thus resolved, told him the ground was worth (*e*) four hundred shekels, a sum beneath the consideration of a man of such immense property, and therefore desired he would immediately apply it to his use in burying his dead.

Abraham being told the price, immediately (*f*) weighed the money to Ephron, four hundred shekels, (*g*) current money with the merchant, in the presence of a great number of people, and the field was thereupon conveyed to him (according to the custom of those times) and his heirs for ever; and then, and not till then, did the Patriarch bury his wife.

As Abraham was now stricken in age, being near an hundred and forty years old, he became naturally desirous of seeing his son married and settled, before his departure out of this transitory life. He therefore

(*d*) *Hittites.* These Hittites were descended from Heth, the son of Canaan, and grandson of Ham, whom Noah had cursed, and then possessed that country.

(*e*) *Four hundred Shekels*, &c. This amounted to forty-six pounds, thirteen shillings and upwards.

(*f*) The money was weighed, because at that time no coinage was invented.

(*g*) Current money with the Merchant; this implies that no base metal was mixed with it, nor any artifice or fraud used to impose on the seller.

called

called to him an old and trusty servant, and, having exacted from him a (*h*) solemn oath, laid strict charge upon him, that he would not take a wife for his son of the daughters of the Canaanites; and enjoined him to go to his own (Abraham's) country and take a wife unto Isaac of his own kindred.

The servant, having received so solemn an injunction from his master, began to reason to this effect, "If the woman refuse to follow me into the land of Canaan, must I return, and fetch thy son to her?" The Patriarch immediately resolves in the negative, as no consideration could prevail upon him to suffer his son to return to a land, which he himself had left on account of the inhumanity and idolatry of its inhabitants.

To encourage however his servant in the prosecution of his intended expedition, he assured him, that a heavenly messenger should go before him and lead to the place from whence he should bring a wife unto his son; but, that if the woman pitched upon should refuse to follow him, then he would be freed from the oath he had taken, as well as deemed to have discharged his whole duty.

The servant having thus settled the matter with his master, set out with a number of attendants and camels, agreeable to the nature of his business and the dignity of the person who dispatched him, travelled till he arrived at Mesopotamia, and then repaired to Haran, the city of his master's brother Nahor; having doubtless heard that *Milcah* his master's wife's sister, Nahor's wife, had born him several children, one of which named *Bethuel*, had a daughter called REBECCA.

The servant arriving at Haran in the evening, caused his camels to rest themselves by a well of water without the city, just about the time, when the women usually came out of the city to draw water. Having been educated by his master in the fear of God, and being sensible of the importance of the business in which he was employed; the servant, before he proceeded a single step, begs of the Almighty direction and success, and fearing lest he should lay hands on any handmaid suddenly, beseeches of God to direct him by a sign to a proper object of choice for his young master. The desired sign was, that she who, at his request, let him drink of her pitcher, should be the person appointed by God, for a wife to his servant Isaac.

The faithful servant had scarcely requested, when his petition was granted; for he presently espied Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel coming from the city, with her pitcher upon her shoulder to fetch water, *Eliezer* (for that was the servant's name) having observed that the damsel was fair, and carried about her every token of virginity, ran to her, after she had filled her pitcher at the

(*h*) *A solemn oath.* The common method of taking an oath among the Hebrews, and all the Oriental nations, agreeable to the sacred Historian, was for the person who swore, to put his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he swore.

well

well, and begged a draught of the water she had drawn.

She kindly consented, and not only gave him to drink, but went again to the well several times, and filled the trough for his camels. When he found her behaviour so exactly correspond with the sign he had requested of the Lord, he presented her with a golden ring, and a pair of bracelets; asking, at the same time, whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in her father's house to lodge him and his attendants that night.

To his great astonishment, she told him, that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor by Milcah, assuring him at the same time, that there was at her father's house, every necessary accommodation for him and his camels.

Eliezer, overcome with the wonderful hand of Providence in his favour, and deeply affected with a sense of God's goodness, in thus directly guiding his course to the house of his master's brethren, in humble acknowledgement bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord, saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of my master* Abraham, *who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth; I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.* While the servant was thus ruminating on, and acknowledging the wonderful interposition of divine Providence, the damsel hastened home, and acquainted her friends, with the extraordinary circumstance that had befallen her.

When her brother, whose name was Laban, observed the ring, and the bracelets upon her arms, and had heard what had passed at the well, he hastened thither with the utmost speed, saluted the man, and invited him home, assuring him, that accommodation was prepared both for him and his family. Eliezer therefore accepted the invitation, and while they were preparing the entertainment, he refused to partake of any food, till he had recounted the nature of his errand, and faithfully delivered his credentials, by telling to whom he belonged.

Having given a general account of his master's circumstances and situation, he thus proceeded, *Sarah, my master's wife bare a son to my master, when she was old, and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the* Canaanites, *in whose land I dwell! but thou shalt go to my father's house, and unto my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.*

He then related a minute account of his whole journey; the manner of his meeting Rebecca, and how remarkably the hand of God had appeared in directing him thither, concluding thus: *And now, if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.*

The father and brother of Rebecca, finding the immediate hand of Providence giving a direct answer, referring him to Rebecca, who was then present, declaring it was God's doing; therefore said they,

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"We ought not to say any thing to it: here is Rebecca before thee, if she consent, take her, and let her be thy master's son's wife." The servant having obtained the maiden's consent, offered up his grateful acknowledgement to the Lord, and having made presents to the damsel, her brother, and mother, he, with his men, refreshed themselves with what they had prepared for their entertainment, and went to rest.

When the family rose in the morning, he desired them to dispatch him back to his master, being impatient to acquaint him, with the success of his journey. The mother and brother, influenced by natural affection, desired that Rebecca might be permitted to tarry with them a few days to take perhaps a last farewel; but Eliezer, like a diligent and faithful steward, would brook no delay, but was for hastening with her home; which, with the maiden's consent, he accordingly did.

Rebecca immediately prepared for her journey, being attended by her nurse Deborah, and left her maid-servants, and left her relations with this blessing: *Thou art our sister; be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.* When Eliezer was faithfully conducting the chosen maiden to his master's house, it so fell out, that Isaac walking in the fields to meditate on the goodness of the Lord, as demonstrated in the vegetable creation, saw his servants and camels upon the road, and went forward to meet them.

Rebecca soon espied him, and asked Eliezer, who he was, and being informed that it was his master, she alighted, and *(i)* veiled herself. Isaac conducted her to his mother's tent, which was allotted for her apartment, took her to wife, and became so enamoured of her charms, that he ceased his grief for the loss of his mother, which had now continued three years.

Isaac being thus happily provided with a wife as the peculiar gift of Providence, the antient patriarch took *Keturah*, one of his maids, to be his concubinary wife, and by her had six sons, to each of whom he gave portions in his life-time, and then sent them east-ward, that they might not stand in competition with Isaac, who was free-born, for any part of his estate, nor settle in the land of Canaan, which the seed of Isaac was to inherit.

Isaac took Rebecca to wife, when he was forty years old, and lived twenty years with her before he had any issue, which he at length obtained by his importunate prayer to God; for now Rebecca conceived.

When she felt the children struggle together within her (for she had twins) she was much startled, and enquiring of the Lord the cause, was told, *That two nations were in her womb, and that two manner of people should be separated from her bowels;*

(i) Veiled.——According to the custom of those countries *Veiling* was a token of subjection, and its practice is still used in many countries by the female sex.

that one of thoſe people ſhould be ſtronger than the other; and the elder ſhould ſerve the younger.

When the time of her delivery arrived, she first brought forth *Eſau*, who was covered with red hair; then followed *Jacob*, whose hand held *Eſau's* heel.

When the boys grew up, Esau became fond of hunting; but Jacob, being of a conſtitution less robust, led a more confined life, and preferred his tent to the airy plain.

As Esau's situation in life afforded him frequent opportunities of supplying his father with venison; he was esteemed before his brother; but Jacob obtained the love of his mother, being always near at hand, and ready to do her any offices of service or honour.

When the boys arrived at the age of fifteen years; their grand-father Abraham departed this life, being one hundred and seventy-five years of age, and was buried by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, in the cave of *Macpelah*, in the field which he had purchaſed of Ephron, the prince of the Hittites, and in the very spot where Sarah his wife had been buried forty years before.

Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, though not his heir, lived many years after the death of his father, left behind him, as was foretold, twelve sons, who were all princes of nations, and died in the hundred and seventh year of his age. Although he had been a vile man, and his hand had been against every man, and every man's hand against him, he died a natural death, in the presence of his brethren, having his family and relations about him.

The two sons of Isaac being grown to maturity, Esau one day, having greatly fatigued himself with hunting in the field, came fainting home at the very instant that Jacob had prepared a mess of pottage, composed of different kinds of vegetables, and of a red colour. Esau seeing the pottages, and his spirits standing in need of refreshment, desired his brother that he might partake of the mess, urging as a motive to persuade him into compliance, that he was very faint.

Jacob, though called a plain man, evidently on this occasion endeavours to avail himself of his brother's necessity; for to inflame his desire the more, though greatly prompted by the keeness of his appetite, as well as render Esau fonder of the bargain by delays, he proposes to him to sell his (*k*) birth-right.

Esau, who was bent upon his pottage, considered not at that time the great and manifold advantages of his birth-right, and consulting his appetite rather than his reason, answers in a sanguine, though faint manner, *behold, I am at the point to die, and what ſhall this birth-right do to me!*

Jacob finding him come to this

(*k*) Birth-right or primogeniture had many and great privileges annexed to it. The first born was consecrated to the Lord, *Exod.* xxii. 29. was next in honour and dignity to the parents, *Gen.* xlix. 3. had a double portion allotted him, *Deut.* xxi. 17. succeeded in the government of the family or kingdom, 2 *Chron.* xxi. 3. and therefore was a matter of the highest moment.

pass,

pass, would not part with his pottage, till he had forced Esau to assign over to him his birth-right by an oath.

Thus needy Esau, without hesitation, sold his birth-right, with all its appertaining benefits, for a simple mess of pottage, which action the sacred historian calls *despising* his birth-right, *Gen.* xxv. 34.

CHAP. VI.

ISAAC REMOVES FROM BEER-SHEBA TO GERAR. ENTERS INTO A COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH. JACOB OBTAINS THE BLESSING FROM HIS FATHER, INSTEAD OF ESAU. FLEES FROM HIS BROTHER'S REVENGE AT THE ADVICE OF REBECCA HIS MOTHER.

ISAAC took up his abode at *Beer-sheba*, the residence of his father Abraham, till a famine which happened in that country, obliged him to remove.

While he was ruminating with himself which way to proceed, the Lord in a vision charged him by no means to go into Egypt, but pursue the divine direction, assuring him on those terms of his peculiar favour and blessing, and that in his descendants he would punctually fulfil the oath he had sworn to his father Abraham, by causing his family to increase and multiply, and making them the instruments of conveying the most important good to mankind.

According to God's command, Isaac directed his course to the country of the Philistines, and fixed his habitation in Gerar, whither on his arrival he used the same stratagem as his father had done in Egypt, and from the same motive; for, fearing that the charms of his wife Rebecca might captivate the men of that country, and thereby endanger his safety, he caused her to pass for his sister, a title very common in those days among kindred of every degree. But the disguise was soon detected, for Abimelech (that is the king) had observed such freedoms between them, as inclined him to think, there could be no other connection than that of man and wife. He therefore sent for Isaac, and severely reprimanded him for endeavouring to impose upon the people, confidently averring from what he had seen that she was his wife.

Isaac thus convicted, attempted not to disprove the charge, but urged in vindication of his conduct, that he did it to save his life: nevertheless the king blamed him for laying a temptation before him and his people, saying, *What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lain with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.* He then gave the strictest charge to his people in general, to avoid giving the least offence either to him or to his wife.

Having received these tokens of the royal sanction and patronage, Isaac applied himself to husbandry, in which it pleased God to render him remarkably successful; insomuch that in process of time, he became so wealthy and powerful, as to excite the envy of the principal inhabitants of Gerar. The success of Isaac however was soon the cause of his departure;

departure; for the king's attendants and favourites, in order to give him offence, ordered the wells to be filled up, that his father's servants had digged; which together with the advice of the king, who was not free from jealousy on his account, determined him to withdraw to some other place. To avoid every cause of suspicion in the king, as well as secure his property, Isaac withdrew to the valley of Gerar, and immediately employed his servants in digging the wells, which the Philistines had filled up; and, when finished, called them by the same names as his father had given them. In the course of their labour, the servants discovered a new well of fine springing water; but a dispute arising between some neighbouring herdsmen and Isaac's people, the former claiming the well as found upon their ground, the latter at the command of their master quitted it; but called it *Eſek*, or Contention, to perpetuate the quarrel, which was occasioned by its discovery. Isaac's servants then digged another well, which also excited contention, and was therefore called *Sitnah*, or Hatred.

Disapproving a situation amongst such contentious and envious people, the Patriarch removed from amongst them, and digged another well, of which he kept peaceable possession, and therefore called, it *Rehobath*, or free space, because his flock had now room to feed at large, and range the country in search of the best pasture: *for now*, said he, *the Lord hath made room for us*, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

But Isaac dwelt not long upon this spot; for he soon returned to *Beer-ſheba*, where on the very night of his arrival, it pleased God to renew the promise he had made to him and his seed for the sake of faithful Abraham: in grateful acknowledgment of which repeated instance of the divine goodness, he built an altar there, called upon the name of the Lord, and determining with God's blessing to tarry there some time, ordered his servants to dig a well; water in those dry and hot countries being a very valuable commodity. Isaac had not long resided here, before Abimelech, touched with a sense of the injury he had done him, and the unworthy treatment he had received from his servants, as well as fearing his just and powerful resentment, thought it most prudent to avoid future trouble, by endeavouring to bring him into a league of friendship with him; taking therefore with him two of his chief friends and subjects, he went to Isaac to Beer-sheba, in order to pay him respect and honour.

To remind the king that he still retained a sense of the injuries he had formerly done him, the Patriarch received his visit but cooly, demanding of him the cause of visiting a person to whom by his conduct and behaviour he had long discovered an aversion?

Abimelech, conscious of his error, and desirous of avoiding the resentment of the Patriarch, told him, that the cause of desiring to be on terms of friendship with him arose from a certain assurance, that the Lord had undertaken to assert his right: assuring

ring him at the same time, that he had retained an esteem for him, and concluding his address, with a very honourable appellation; *thou art now the bleſſed of the Lord.*

Isaac being of a peaceable disposition entertained Abimelech and his attendants with great liberality; and, the ensuing morning, the king and the Patriarch entered into a covenant of friendship, ratified the same by a solemn and mutual oath, and they parted from each other with much peace and respect. Isaac had no sooner dismissed Abimelech than his servant came and informed him, that they had found water, upon which he called it *Sheba.*

A circumstance now happened which sorely grieved the Patriarch and his wife *Rebecca: Eſau,* who had long discovered a perverse and obstinate temper, at the age of forty years, took two wifes *Judith* and *Beſhemath,* from among the daughters of the *Hittites;* though he could not but be sensible of the caution his pious grandfather always took to prevent his father from marrying into that idolatrous family, yet such was the power of natural affection with Isaac, that, swayed by an over fondness for a disobedient and rebellious son, he would have preferred the order of nature to the will of God, who had expressly declared before *Eſau* and *Jacob* were born, that the elder should serve the younger; but Providence disappointed his purposes, in order to promote its own wise and gracious designs.

Being now an hundred and thirty-seven years old, he called to him his son Esau, for whom he always entertained a partial regard, and reminding him of his advanced years, and the uncertainty of his life, desired him to take his bow and quiver, kill some venison, and make him savory meat, that his spirits might be refreshed, and his mind properly disposed for giving him that solemn blessing, which pious parents in those days always bestowed upon their children, and which was held sacred, as a presage of their future prosperity.

Rebecca overheard what had passed between Esau and his father, who she well knew preferred him to Jacob; and determined if possible to deprive him of the intended blessing, and by stratagem cause it to be pronounced on her youngest son. To effect this, she called Jacob, acquainted him with the design of his father to pronounce his solemn blessing on his brother, and having enjoined him to a punctual obedience to whatever she should command, bade him go immediately to the flock, and fetch from thence two kids of the goats, and with them, said she, *I will make ſavoury meat for thy father, ſuch as he loveth; and thou ſhalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bleſs thee before his death.*

The upright youth, hesitates to comply with his mother's injunction, lest his father should detect his design, and instead of a blessing, should pronounce upon him a curse. His reluctance was increased by this additional reflection; that as Esau was remarkable hairy, and he remarkable

smooth; his father to supply the defect of sight might handle him, and thereby discover the cheat: he therefore mentioned this circumstance as a farther ground of objection; but his mother determined on her purposes, takes upon herself whatever might result from the same, *(l) upon me be thy Curse my Son, only obey my voice and go fetch me them.*

At length assured of his mother's extraordinary affection for him, he delayed not, but went immediately and brought the kids, of which his mother made savoury meat, such as she knew her husband loved. The food thus prepared, she put upon Jacob Esau's best attire, and covered his hands and neck with the skins of the kids, and presenting him with the savoury meat sent him with it to his father Isaac. As soon as he entered, the good old man enquired of him who he was? Jacob replied, I am Esau thy *(m)* first-born; I have punctually obeyed your command, arise, and eat of my venison that thy soul may bless me." The old man surprised at the haste with which his desire was executed, enquired of him how it came to pass that he found the venison so quickly? Jacob replied, because the Lord brought it to me; but still Isaac diffident of his person, desired him to approach, that he might feel and thereby be assured whether or not he was really and verily his son Esau.

Jacob accordingly came near, and his aged father when he had felt his hands, which were covered with the skin of a kid; could not determine whether it was Esau or Jacob, discovering his doubt in these words; "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." At length however, being obliged to rely on the veracity of his son, he put the question to him more strongly; *art thou my very son Esau?* Jacob answered as falsely as readily, *I am*; and the good old man being now satisfied that he was indeed his son Esau, bade him bring the venison, that he might eat thereof, and bless him.

The savoury meat was accordingly brought, and Isaac having eat thereof, and drank of the wine, with which his son furnished him, called him to come near and kiss him, which when Jacob had done, he blessed him in these words, *see the smell of my son is as the smell of a field, which the Lord hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the (n) Dew of Heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty*

(l) *Upon me*, &c. *Rebecca* seems to have been persuaded, that Jacob had a just title to the first blessing, which Esau had sold with his birth-right, and which God had designed for Jacob from the beginning; whence she thought it her duty to deceive Isaac into an action, which he ought to have done voluntarily, and therefore takes the whole curse upon herself, provided Isaac should discover the fallacy. But, though these circumstances have a great tendency to palliate the guilt both of Jacob and his mother, yet they are not sufficient to excuse them, the former having increased his crime by affirming an absolute lye, *I am Esau thy first born*, &c. We should upon the whole lament the frailty of human nature, which is ever liable to err, and at the same time admire the impartiality of the sacred writings in which the very blemishes and transgressions of those who make the greatest figure therein, are recorded for our instruction.

(m) *First born.* Some commentators suppose that Jacob meant, that he represented or stood in the place of Esau the first born, by virtue of the purchase he had made of the primogeniture or birth-right of his brother. But this is offered as mere opinion.

(n) *Dew*, &c. In those hot countries, showers being less

plenty of corn and wine. Let people ſerve thee and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's ſons bow down to thee. Curſed be every one that curſeth thee, and bleſſed be he that bleſſeth thee. Jacob had no sooner received the blessing from his father and was gone from his presence, than Esau came in, bringing the venison prepared for him to eat, and saying, *let my father ariſe and eat of his ſon's veniſon, that thy ſoul may bleſs me.* Isaac confounded at the circumstance, hastily asked, who he was? and when Esau replied, that he was his son, even his first-born Esau; he was seized with a sudden trembling, and with astonished countenance, asked, *who and where was he* that had brought venison into him of which he had eaten before he came and blessed him; and to give a farther sanction to the transaction, he added, *yea, and he ſhall be bleſſed.* When the disappointed Esau heard these words of his father, he exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, *Bleſs me, even me alſo, O my Father.* His father in excuse told him, that his brother by a stratagem had got the blessing from him.

Esau then remonstrated on the injustice of the proceeding, having first taken away his birth-right, and then the blessing of his father; but pathetically asked, if he had not in reserve a blessing for him; repeating the importunate request, *Bleſs me, even me, alſo, O my Father,* and wept most bitterly.

The good old man moved with compassion for his unhappy son, in order to appease his troubled mind a little, said to him, *behold thy dwelling ſhall be the fatneſs of the earth, and of the dew of Heaven from above; and by thy ſword ſhalt thou live, and ſhalt ſerve thy brother, and it ſhall come to paſs, when thou ſhalt have the dominion, that thou ſhalt break his yoke from off thy neck.* But this address availed not, for Esau conceived a most implacable hatred against his brother Jacob, for depriving him of the important blessing, and determined as soon as his father should die, to slay him.

Rebecca being informed of Esau's desperate resolution on the life of her beloved Jacob, acquainted him with the horrid design, and advised him to betake him hastily to her brother *Laban* at *Haran*, and there remain till his brother's fury might be somewhat abated, assuring him that she would particularly observe the same, and send him word when he might return with safety. Jacob, who ever listened to, and obeyed the counsel of his mother, was ready to comply with her proposal, but was not willing to depart before he had obtained his father's consent, which in this case, he much doubted of effecting. To remove this difficulty therefore, Rebecca artfully complained of the concern, under which she laboured on

less frequent than with us, the morning and evening dews were of the utmost importance to refresh the earth, and produce that plenty for which the country was so remarkable.

account

account of Esau's taking wives from among the daughters of the Hittites, insinuating her fear, lest Jacob should follow his example. Though Isaac understood not the drift of this complaint, yet being a pious man, and knowing that the promise made to his father Abraham, and renewed to him, was to be fulfilled in Jacob's issue; and being very anxious that he might not corrupt his blood by intermarrying with idolators, whom God would destroy, called Jacob to him, and with his blessing laid on him a most solemn injuction, that he should not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but go to *Pandam-aram*, to the house of *Bethuel*, his mother's father, and take from them a wife of the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother; and farther to encourage him, pronounces his blessing, *God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham to thee and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto* Abraham. Isaac then dispatched away his son Jacob, and he went to Pandam-aram, unto Laban, according to his father's directions.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

JACOB'S VISIONS AND VOW. JACOB IS ENTERTAINED BY LABAN. COVENANTETH FOR RACHEL; IS DECEIVED WITH LEAH, BUT AT LENGTH MARRIES RACHEL ALSO. RACHEL IS CONCERNED ON ACCOUNT OF HER BARRENNESS, AND AT LENGTH BLESSED WITH A SON, WHOM SHE CALLED JOSEPH. JACOB ENTERS INTO A NEW COVENANT WITH LABAN; BY A SCHEME BECOMES VERY RICH. DEPARTS FROM LABAN, IS PURSUED, AND TAKEN; ENTERS IN A FRESH COVENANT WITH LABAN.

THE disappointed Esau finding that his father had again blessed his brother Jacob, and dispatched him to Pandam-aram, with the most solemn injunction not to marry with any of the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob, in obedience to his father's command, was departed, could not but reflect on his own conduct in taking those Hittite wives. To reinstate himself therefore, if possible, in the favour of his father, he went and took to wife *Mahalath*, his uncle *Ishmael's* daughter; but this produced not the desired effect.

Jacob departing from Beer-sheba, proceeded towards Haran; but night overtaking him, he took up his lodging in the (*o*) open air, having the sky for his covering, and stones for his pillow. While he slept, he dreamed, that he saw a ladder set

(*o*) So exact was Jacob in observing the command of his father, that he would not enter any house that belonged to a Canaanite, but chose rather to sleep in the open air.

upon

upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Above this ladder stood the Lord, who thus bespoke him; *I am the God of* Abraham *thy father, and the God of* Isaac: *the Land whereon thou lieſt, to thee will I give it, and to thy ſeed; and thy ſeed ſhall be as the duſt of the earth, and thou ſhalt ſpread abroad to the weſt, and to the eaſt, and to the north, and to the ſouth; and in thee, and in thy ſeed, ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed.*

Jacob was ſo affected with this dream, that when he awoke, he exclaimed; *(p) ſurely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!*

As this is the firſt account in ſacred hiſtory of God's immediately appearing to Jacob, there is reaſon to think it was the firſt time; for we find, it ſtruck him with a religious awe, and he ſaid, in a holy rapture; *How dreadful is this place! this is the houſe of God, the gate of heaven!*

When Jacob aroſe from his airy couch, he took the chief ſtone on which he had lain his head, and ſet it up as a monument of God's loving-kindneſs towards him, in confirming ſo ſolemnly the promiſes made to his fathers; and as a mark to diſtinguiſh the very ſpot, to thoſe who might travel that way.

Having ſet up the ſtone, he poured *(q)* oil upon it, and in token of ſo remarkable a diſplay of divine love, changed the name of the place from *Luz*, to *(r) Bethel.*

Before he departed from this memorable ſpot, he repeated in a moſt ſolemn manner part of the divine promiſe; and in order to bind himſelf more ſtrongly to the ſervice of God made a vow, ſaying to this purport, "If God will be with me, and direct me in my journey, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, ſo that I return to my father's houſe in peace, then ſhall the Lord be my God: and this ſtone which I have ſet up as a pillar, ſhall be God's houſe: and of all that thou ſhalt give me, I will ſurely give the tenth unto thee."

The pious traveller having performed a ſolemn vow unto the Lord proceeded on his journey, till he came to the well of Haran, near which lay ſeveral flocks of ſheep. He then enquired of the ſhepherds if they knew Laban, the ſon of Nahor? and was informed they did; and that Rachel his daughter approached with her flock, to water at the well.

During his diſcourſe with the ſhep-

(p) Surely the Lord, &c. We are by no means to infer from this exclamation, that Jacob had ſuch contracted notions of the omnipreſent Jehovah, as to imagine that he was not preſent throughout, yea, beyond all ſpace. The meaning therefore is plainly this, that he could not have imagined before, that the Lord would have choſen that ſpot to manifeſt his peculiar and glorious preſence. This ſenſe is confirmed by ſeveral of the ancient verſions, and particularly the *Chaldee.*

(q) Oil, &c. We find from ſeveral ancient writers that this ceremony was uſed in conſecrating things to a divine uſe; and that among the heathens every ſtone that had received this rite, was eſteemed as divine and honoured with adoration.

(r) Bethel, that is the houſe of God, from BETH, a houſe, and EL, God

herds, the damsel arrived with her fleecy care, and Jacob, as a token of respect, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep in her stead; which done, he kissed her, wept for joy, and told her who he was.

Rachel left Jacob at the well, and hastened to acquaint her father with what had happened. The good old man overjoyed at the arrival of his sister's son ran out to meet him, and having most cordially embraced him, conducted him to his house.

On their arrival at Laban's house Jacob recounted the occasion of his coming from home, and some of the incidents that happened in the way, insomuch that his uncle was convinced he left not his parents for any misdemeanor on his part, but strict obedience to their will and pleasure, though he travelled without any attendants.

Laban, finding from his account that he was under the immediate care and protection of Providence, acknowledged him as his near relative, and kindly entertained him, but Jacob, unaccustomed to an inactive life, entered himself in the business of his occupation, which when Laban had observed, he acquainted him that he by no means desired his service for nought, and insisted on his mentioning his own terms.

Rachel, the beautiful and virtuous (*s*) shepherdess, had already captivated his heart, and he proposed her as the reward of seven years service. Laban immediately consented to the proposal, and Jacob entered on his service most cheerfully, having an eye to the reward, which in his judgment was inestimable.

His affection for Rachel sweetened the servitude, as well as rendered the time apparently short; and, when it was expired, Jacob demanded Rachel to wife. Laban, on the occasion, invited all his friends and neighbours to the solemnization of the nuptials; but, desirous of retaining Jacob in his service, he treated him very unfairly; for in the evening he took Leah his other daughter, and brought her to Jacob's (*t*) bed, instead of Rachel, to whom he was contracted.

When Jacob discovered the deceit (*u*) in the morning, he expostulated with Laban on the injustice of his treatment; but his uncle waved the affair, by observing, that it was not the custom of the country to give the younger in marriage before the elder. Though this excuse was so trifling, Laban, who had observed Jacob's fondness for Rachel, knew he could, bring him to any terms, and therefore demanded the same course of service for his young daughter; and as he had the utmost reason to appre-

(*s*) *Shepherdess.* This innocent and useful employ, in those early ages, was reputed no disgrace: the greatest heroes of antiquity, the sons of kings, and kings themselves are represented as engaged in the same, which was then as honourable as it is now despicable.

(*t*) It was customary in that country for the Bride, as an emblem of modesty, to be covered with a veil, when she was brought to the Bridegroom; by this means, doubtless, Jacob was imposed on by Laban, and could not discern that it was Leah till the next morning.

(*u*) It is not a little remarkable, that Jacob, who deprived Esau of the blessing his father intended him by fraud, lost what he esteemed an invaluable blessing by fraud likewise.

hend

hend that Jacob in resentment of the fraud would discard Leah, he entreated him to fulfil her week, promising on those terms to give him her also in marriage. Jacob complied with the proposal, and then married Rachel, of whom being passionately fond he slighted Leah. But God, compassionating the case of Leah, opened her womb, and restrained Rachel from child-bearing, insomuch that the former bare four sons before the latter even conceived. The fruitfulness of her sister excited the envy of Rachel who in process of time broke off all family connection and became averse to the very sight of Leah.

Such was her concern for her barrenness that it bewildered her imagination, and in very opprobrious terms she vented her rage upon her husband; *Give me children, or elſe I die:* but Jacob checked such an inordinate sally of temper in a manner becoming a person of prudence and piety, in this short, though stinging reproof, *Am I in God's ſtead, who hath with-held from thee the fruit of the womb.*

Rachel, thus convinced of her folly and rashness, proposed a method to supply this defect in herself; this was the stratagem pursued by her grandmother Sarah, for having advised concerning the matter with her husband, she gave him her handmaid *Bilhah* as a concubinary wife, thinking to esteem and cherish as her own, the children which Jacob might have by her maid. Rachel therefore, according to her design, when Bilhah bore Jacob a son, claimed him as her own, and called him *Dan*, as she did also a second, whom she named *Naphthali.*

But this artifice of Rachel to secure her husband's love was counteracted by Leah, who likewise gave one of her maids to Jacob, and when she bore him a son, called his name GAD or a *troop*, as she did a second *Aſher* or *bleſſed.* By this time Reuben, Leah's eldest son by Jacob, was arrived at years sufficient to be trusted by himself, and wandering one day in the fields, he found some extraordinary (*w*) flowers, which he brought home and presented to his mother.

Rachel was captivated with the sight of them, and desired her sister to give her part; but Leah, likewise envying Rachel from a suspicion that she shared too largely in her husband's affection, churlishly answered her request; *Is it a ſmall matter that thou haſt taken my huſband, but you muſt take my ſon's flowers too?* Rachel, having a peculiar inclination to the flowers, waved all harsh reply, and, endeavouring to win her over to her will by mild and gentle measures, proposed if she would give her some of the flowers, that she should enjoy her husband's company that night, though in the course of things he was then to be the consort of Rachel.

(*w*) The learned in general are of opinion that our translation errs in rendering the Hebrew word DODAIM Mandrakes; it being well known that the Mandrake has a very strong stupefying smell, and nothing inviting either in taſte or colour to induce a child like Reuben to pluck it. Beside, the time in which they were gathered proves that it could not have been the Mandrake; because the wheat Harvest in those hot countries is in *May*, and the fruit of this plant is not ripe till *September*. The word may be rendered *deſireable flowers*, for it signifies lover in the dual number, and conveys an idea of delight.

Leah

Leah approved of the proposal, and the agreement was accordingly made; but to make sure of the bargain, she sent out to meet Jacob on his return from the field, and, having told him the contract between herself and Rachel, enjoyed his company that night. Though he now thought she was past child-bearing, she conceived once more, and brought forth her fifth son, whom she called *Iſſachar*, because he was the product of her hire.

Leah conceived again, and bare a sixth son, whom she called *Zebulon*; and at length she bare to Jacob the only daughter of whom we read whose name was *Dinah*.

Rachel had long lamented in bitterness of soul her want of issue: but at length it pleased God in his infinite goodness to hearken to her petition, grant her earnest desire, and bless her with a son. Rejoicing that God had taken away her (*x*) reproach, and foretelling that the Lord would bestow on her another son, she called her first-born *Joſeph*.

Soon after the birth of Joseph, the appointed time of Jacob's servitude being expired, he began to grow desirous of returning to his own country; and therefore reminding Laban, that he had fulfilled his contract, he desired him to deliver his wives and children, for whom he had served him, that he might go to the habitation of his father.

Laban, sensible of the vast importance of Jacob's continuance with him, endeavoured to divert him from all desire of leaving him, by assuring him that, since he was with him, he had received many peculiar tokens of the divine blessing; and offering him whatever terms he should propose. But all his endeavours to keep Jacob in his service were in vain; he well knew, nor failed to tell him, that through the blessing of God on his honest and faithful labours, he had increased his little herd to a multitude, reminding him at the same time that it was absolutely necessary he should act for himself and make provision for his own family which was become numerous.

Laban, still desirous of retaining him, pressed him hard, and once more offered him his own terms.

Jacob would accept of no stated wages, but proposed these conditions: That they should pass through the whole flock of sheep and goats, and having separated all the speckled cattle from the white, the former should be committed to the care of Laban's sons and the latter to the care of Jacob; then whatsoever spotted or brown cattle should be produced out of the white flock, which he was to keep, should be his wages.

Laban immediately consented to the proposal; the flocks were accordingly separated; and the spotted cattle were delivered into the custody of Laban, while the rest were committed to the care of Jacob; and to prevent any intercourse between them, they were set three days journey apart.

The flocks being thus separated

(*x*) *Reproach.* As fruitfulness was then accounted a great blessing from that God, who said, *Increaſe and multiply*, so barrenness was accounted a Reproach or Curse.

and

and committed to the care of their respective keepers; Jacob, by the assistance of the Divine Wisdom, pursued a very extraordinary method to improve his own stock and at the same time lessen that of Laban. He took rods or twigs off the green poplar, hazel, and chesnut trees, and, stripping off part of the rinds in strakes, caused some of the white to appear on the twigs: these twigs he placed in the watering troughs, when the cattle came to drink, at the time in which they usually engender; that, seeing the speckled twigs they might conceive, and bring forth speckled cattle. He also took particular care to place the twigs before the fattest and most healthy cattle; and also to avoid putting any before those that were weak and sickly, by which wise procedure he not only obtained for himself the greater number, but the choicest and most valuable.

Thus, in a short time, through the blessing of God, Jacob became exceedingly rich and powerful: but the extraordinary increase of his property exposed him to the envy of Laban's sons and even of Laban himself, insomuch that they were continually murmuring against him, because he had raised himself to a good estate out of their fortunes.

Jacob, having observed Laban's coolness and indifference towards him, began to think of leaving him, and return to his father's house, which design he was shortly commanded by God in a vision to put into execution.

He therefore sent to his wives in the field, where he kept his flock, in order to consult with them and gain their consent to go with him. When they came, he laid before them the whole of his purpose, telling them, he observed their father of late had treated him with great coolness and indifference, and even sometimes with marks of displeasure, though he knew no just cause for such behaviour. He also took occasion to appeal to them concerning his industry and fidelity, and the injustice of their father toward him, first, in deceiving him, and afterwards changing his wages so often; and then observed to them, that God had turned all their father's devices to his advantage, and had taken away his cattle, and given them unto him. Then he acquainted them that the Lord had appeared unto him in a dream, reminding him of the solemn vow he had made at Bethel, in his passage thither, and commanded him to return to the land of his fathers.

His wives having attentively listened to all that he said, agreed with his opinion concerning their father, consented to go with him, and desired him to perform whatsoever God had commanded.

Jacob immediately prepared for his journey, set his wives and children upon camels, and proceeded with all his cattle and goods, taking the advantage of the absence of Laban, who was gone to shear his sheep; which likewise gave Rachel an opportunity of stealing and carrying off her father's (*y*) Images.

Jacob passed the river *Euphrates* and

(*y*) The Hebrew word *Teraphim*, signifies idols as appears from *Gen.* xxxi. 30. where they are termed *Elohai* or

and made towards *Mount Gilead*, and though it was three days before Laban knew of his departure, yet in seven days he overtook him upon the Mount.

There is the utmost reason to think that Laban pursued him with a mind bent upon revenge; but the Lord, mindful of the welfare of his servant, charged him most solemnly not even to hurt him by word; therefore, when he and his kindred came up with Jacob, he only expostulated with him on the want of respect he discovered in stealing away his daughters, and thereby preventing them from taking leave of him as became his children, or departing in a manner agreeable to their rank and dignity. He added, that such a conduct might have exposed him to his most severe resentment, and that he might have sustained much injury from him, who was by far the most powerful: nay, he absolutely hinted to him, that he would have pursued measures of revenge, had he not been diverted therefrom by the awful prohibition of God himself.

Nor did he only upbraid him with want of duty and affection, but even charged him with theft, saying, *And now though thou wouldeſt needs be gone, becauſe thou ſore longeſt after thy fathers houſe; yet, wherefore haſt thou ſtolen my (z) Gods?*

Jacob urged as an excuse for his abrupt departure, his fear lest, if he had acquainted him with the design, he would have prevented its accomplishment, by detaining his daughters by force: but somewhat warmed with the charge of theft (not knowing that Rachel had stolen the images) he vehemently exclaimed, *With whomſoever thou findeſt thy Gods, let him not live!* And farther, to assert his innocence, he calls upon him to search his goods before all that were present, and to retain whatever of his property he should find upon him.

Laban then proceeded to search, and having ransacked the tents of Jacob, Leah, and her two handmaids, he went into the tent of Rachel, who conscious of her crime, and fearful of the anger both of her father and husband upon detection, had just concealed the images in the camel's furniture, and sat down upon them.

Having used this precaution, when her father entered her tent, she pleaded as an excuse for not rising to salute him, that the custom of women was then upon her, and Laban, out of modesty omitted searching that place where alone the images were to be found.

Thus baffled by the cunning of his daughter, after a long search he could not find what he had so industriously sought, and was therefore very se-

or Gods. It is also evident from 1 *Sam.* xix. 13, that they were of human form; for the very word is used for the image which Michael put into David's bed. These Images they consulted as oracles concerning things unknown for the present or future. Some think that Rachel stole them to prevent her father from discovering her flight by consulting them, while others are of opinion that it was to secure something that might appease her father's anger, if he should overtake them in their flight. But these are at best, but conjecture; though we have too much ground to think that our forefathers were tainted with this kind of idolatry.

(z) *Gods.* This is the very word which before is rendered Images, and therefore justifies our former remark, concerning the idolatry, even of his enlightened people.

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verely reprimanded by Jacob, who not only reproached him with a most unjust suspicion, but appealed to his own friends to decide the case betwixt them. Then recounting the long service he had done him, during a number of years, concluded his upbraiding address in words to this purport, "Except the God of my fathers had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty. But God hath seen my affliction, and the labour of mine hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

Laban, conscious that Jacob's charge was most justly founded, attempted not a vindication of himself; and therefore, waving the debate, he assumed an air of fondness and respect for Jacob, his wives and his children, as nearly related to himself, and proposed a covenant of peace between them. This being agreed to by both parties, they erected a pillar or heap of stones by way of *memorandum*, and then took a mutual oath, that neither of them would invade the property of the other, and that Jacob would not treat his wives unbecoming an affectionate husband.

The ceremony thus finished, Jacob entertained his brethren that night upon the mount, and the next morning Laban took leave of his daughters and their children, and they both departed for their respective habitations.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

GOD AGAIN APPEARS UNTO JACOB. JACOB SENDS A MESSENGER AND PRESENTS TO HIS BROTHER ESAU. WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL. IS CALLED ISRAEL. MEETS HIS BROTHER, WHO RECEIVES HIM KINDLY. DINAH IS RAVISHED. THE SHECHEMITES ARE CIRCUMCISED, AND AFTERWARDS DESTROYED TOGETHER WITH THEIR CITY BY THE SONS OF JACOB IN REVENGE FOR THE RAPE OF DINAH.

AS Jacob was favoured with a heavenly vision when he first departed from his father's; so it pleased God again to favour him with the same token of his protection at his return. When Jacob saw the angels that were sent to meet him on the way; he said, *this* is God's (*a*) Host. Though this Patriarch had the greatest reason to rely on the protection of the Almighty; yet, as he was near the confines of *Edom*, and within the reach of his incensed brother Esau, whom he had highly provoked, and concerning the abatement of whose resentment he had received no account from his mother, though he had been absent twenty years, he thought it most prudent to send a message to him in order to allay his anger and regain, if possible, his fraternal affection.

He therefore ordered the messengers to address Esau in these humble

(*a*) *Hoft.* The original word, signifies, two hosts or camps; because the Angel appeared like two armies drawn up on either side for his protection, according to that beautiful expression of the Psalmist; the Angel of the Lord *encampeth* round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. *Pfalm* xxxiv. 4.

terms;

terms; *thy ſervant* Jacob *ſaith thus, I have ſojourned with* Laban, *and ſtayed there until now: and I have oxen and aſſes, and men ſervants and women ſervants, and I have ſent to my (b) Lord, that I may find grace in thy ſight.* The meſſengers having fulfilled their embaſſy returned, and gave Jacob ſuch an account as terrified him not a little. They brought no direct anſwer from Eſau, and only told Jacob, that his brother was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men. Concluding that the deſign of this mighty retinue was to act againſt him in an hoſtile manner, Jacob was greatly perplexed in what manner to proceed; he knew on the one hand, that his numbers were too ſmall to engage with his brother, and that on the other hand, his baggage was too heavy for flight: he therefore came to a reſolution to divide his people and cattle into two bands, which, being placed at a convenient diſtance, if Eſau ſhould fall upon one of them, the other might have a chance to eſcape.

This was the plan laid down by Jacob; but as he well knew from former experience, that his ſafety depended upon the divine protection, independent of human meaſures; to the God of his ſalvation, he applied in this critical juncture, in terms to the following import: "God of my father Abraham and Iſaac, which ſaidſt to me, return to thy country, and I will do well by thee: I am not worthy of the leaſt of thy mercies; but thou haſt increaſed my ſtock, for when I paſſed over the river firſt, I had nothing but my ſtaff, and now I am become a multitude: deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, for I fear his malice, leſt he ſmite me and mine. Remember how thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good, and make thy poſterity as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

After he had thus humbly and earneſtly implored the guidance and protection of the Almighty, he determined to purſue another meaſure, which he hoped might appeaſe the anger of his brother; for imagining that he might eſteem the firſt meſſage but a mere formal compliment, he reſolved, ſince he had already informed him, that he was become very rich to ſend him a very liberal preſent; but fearing that he might attack him before the preſent could be delivered, he was obliged to ſend that which was neareſt at hand, which were theſe articles: two hundred ſhe goats, and twenty he goats; two hundred ewes, and twenty rams; thirty milch camels with their colts; forty kine, and ten bulls, and twenty ſhe aſſes, with ten aſs-foles, all in ſeparate droves, ordering his ſervants to keep them at a proper diſtance, charging the ſervants who followed

(b) *Lord.* By this ſubmiſſion, Jacob did not reject the honour God conferred upon him, but reverenced Eſau as his elder brother. Beſides it is beyond a doubt, that Jacob meant no more by the terms, Lord and Servant, than a mere honorary compliment, firſt practiſed among the idolatrous nations, and then uſed by the people of God, in order to ſoften the reſentment of the rugged Eſau.

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the foremost drove, to deliver the present to his brother, and so on to the rest, hoping that such a submissive conduct might soften his rugged temper, and induce him to receive him kindly.

Having dismissed the servants with his present to his brother, he passed the brook *Jabbock* that very night, with his wives and children; and being left alone, there appeared a man, who *(c)* wrestled with him till the break of day, and permitted Jacob to prevail; but to convince him that he obtained not the victory through his own strength, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and put it out of joint. At break of day, the Angel desired to depart, but Jacob would not let him go, till he had blessed him.

The man then enquired of him his name, and on his telling him it was Jacob, replied, *thy name ſhall not only be called* Jacob, *but likewiſe (d)* Israel; *for as a prince thou haſt power with God and with men, and haſt prevailed.*

Jacob in his turn, demanded his name, but he waved answering him, and having blessed him, departed.

When the Sun arose, Jacob removed from the place where he had wrestled, and called it *(e) Peniel, becauſe*, said he, *I have ſeen God face to face, and my life is preſerved.*

Jacob then proceeded on his journey, and had not gone far before he saw his brother Esau attended by four hundred men; upon which he disposed his people in such order as best conduced to the reception of his brother and safety of those he held most dear. He placed the two handmaids and their children foremost, Leah and her children in the middle, and his beloved Rachel and her son Joseph in the rear, and passed himself before them all.

When he approached his brother, he bowed himself seven times to the ground; but Esau, filled with the tenderest sense of fraternal affection, at once removed the necessity both of his fears and compliments, by running with eager joy to meet him, falling upon his neck, and most cordially embracing him.

Thus was revenge turned into love and pity; and Esau, who once thirsted for his brother's blood, dissolves into tears of joy, and melts into the softest endearments of friendship.

Esau, thus transported with this happy interview, survey'd with pleasure his brother's immense store, but was with much difficulty persuaded to accept of a present. He saluted his wives and children; and, as a farther token of his affection and sincere reconciliation, offered to accompany him the remaining part of his journey.

But Jacob, still retaining a spark of

(c) *Wreſtled*, &c. The person, who is here said to have wrestled with Jacob, was an Angel, and the reason of his permitting him to prevail, was to give him hope, that in like manner he should mitigate and conquer his brother Esau. This was the opinion of both the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers.

(d) *Iſrael*, &c. We have in this place, a remarkable instance, that translations often contradict themselves; for it is very certain that this Patriarch, was afterwards called Jacob. *No more* therefore should be translated *not only*, which is very properly implied in this place, and would remove the seeming contradiction.

(e) *Peniel* or *Penuel*, as it is in the next verse, that is, the Face of God.

jealousy, waved the kind offer, by telling him, that the children being tender, and many of the cattle young, if they were over-driven, most of them would die, and therefore desiring that his brother would pass over before him, and himself would follow gently, as the children and cattle could bear, until he should attend him in his own country of *(f)* Seir.

As Jacob declined his brother's offer, he courteously proposed to leave some of his people to guard and attend him; but Jacob likewise evaded this, by a handsome compliment.

They then parted from each other, Esau proceeding towards Seir, and Jacob towards Succoth, where, as he intended to take up his abode for some time, he built conveniencies to shelter his people and cattle.

From Succoth he removed to *Salem*, a city of SHECHEM, where, having purchased a piece of ground of the children of Hamor, for a hundred *(g)* pieces of money, he spread his tent, erected an altar, and called upon the name of the most mighty God of Israel.

During the Patriarch's stay in the country of the Shechemites, his daughter Dinah, who was now about sixteen years of age, desirous of seeing the dresses and ornaments of the women of that country, rambled abroad from her mother's tent. It fell out, that young Shechem, the son of Hamor, prince of that country, saw the damsel, and being enraptured with her charms, and incapable of restraining his passion, seized on the opportunity of her being alone, to deprive her of her virtue.

This violation, instead of disgusting, inflamed him the more; for he afterwards loved her with an excessive affection, insomuch that, not being able to live without her, he importuned his father, to procure her for him in marriage.

The news of the rape soon reached the ears of Jacob, who suspended his resentment till his sons came home from the field, when he made them acquainted with the injury their sister had sustained, and the dishonour that resulted to their family; upon which they secretly vowed revenge.

Shechem, having prevailed with his father Hamor to use his interest in obtaining for him the beautiful Dinah; he took an opportunity, when Jacob and his sons were together, to acquaint them with his son's ardent love for the damsel, and entreat that he might have her to wife. To enforce the entreaty, he proposed, that Jacob's family should intermarry with his people, and offered them the freedom of the country, to dwell, trade, and settle therein.

To strengthen this proposal, *Shechem*, who was present at the conference, offered them what advantage they should please to nominate, bidding them only name their terms; and they should be granted to the utter-

(f) Seir. It is the opinion of most commentators, that Jacob never intended to meet Esau, at Seir, and that this was only an evasion for Esau's offer.

(g) *Pieces*, &c. This is sometimes rendered an hundred lambs, because the image of a lamb was stamped upon it.

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most, provided they would give him their sister in marriage.

The sons of Jacob retained their resentment, though as yet they concealed it; and still desirous of avenging the dishonour done to their family, to avail themselves hereafter, they insisted on nothing less than a general circumcision of the Shechemites, as the only condition on which they would accept of an agreement to settle and incorporate with them.

Shechem, was so enamoured of Dinah, and Hamor so fond of his son, that this very extraordinary proposal of the sons of Jacob was complied with. To further the agreement, the prince and his son, on their return to town, summoned their subjects together, praised the Israelites as a quiet, well-disposed people, and assured them, that if they should intermarry with them, they would become proprietors of their substance, which was very considerable, and all on the easy condition of being circumcised.

These weak people, captivated with the prospect of great wealth, consented one and all to the proposal of Hamor and Shechem, and were every male of them immediately circumcised.

Notwithstanding the Shechemites had submitted to the painful rite of circumcision, the proposed condition of reconciliation with Jacob's family; yet *Simeon* and *Levi*, the brothers of Dinah took advantage of their pain and anguish, when they were least able to resist; and on the *(h)* third day after the operation, fell upon the city, and destroyed all the male inhabitants; an action shocking to humanity; for doubtless many of the sufferers were entirely ignorant of the design of the leader.

They likewise searched the house of Shechem, where they found Dinah their sister, and brought her out, after which they fell to plunder, and carried off not only what was found in the city, but all that was in the field, making the women and children prisoners, what they could not carry off they destroyed.

Thus did the sons of Jacob glut their revenge on the miserable Shechemites, for the rape committed on their sister Dinah, by the son of their prince.

Pious Jacob was not only unconcerned in, but wholly ignorant of this slaughter committed by his sons, till it was over; for we find that he severely reprimanded their barbarity as threatening the most dreadful consequences to himself and his family: *Ye have troubled me, to make me to ſtink among the inhabitants of the land, amongſt the* Canaanites, *and the* Perizites; *and I being few in number, they ſhall gather themſelves together againſt me and ſlay me; and I ſhall be deſtroyed I and my houſe.* But Simeon and Levi who had been principally concerned in the destructive scene, urged as an excuse for

(*h*) *Third Day.* This was the time as physicians observe, when fevers generally attend circumcision, occasioned by the inflammation of the wound, and which was more painful then, as the *Hebrews* observed, than at any time else.

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their riotous behaviour, the regard they had to their sister's virtue; *shall he deal with our sister as with an harlot?* and so ended the remonstrance between the pious father and his two headstrong sons.

CHAP. IX.

JACOB REMOVES TO BETHEL. PURGES HIS HOUSE OF IDOLATRY. RACHEL DIES IN CHILD-BED. JACOB VISITS HIS FATHER ISAAC. JOSEPH'S PIETY AND WISDOM EXCITE THE HATRED OF HIS BRETHREN. JOSEPH'S DREAMS INCREASE THEIR ENVY. THEY THEREFORE CONSPIRE HIS DEATH. HE IS SOLD TO POTIPHAR, AN OFFICER OF PHARAOH'S GUARD. JUDAH'S INCEST WITH TAMAR.

THE savage disposition of the *Chaldeans*, exasperated by the injuries they had sustained from the sons of Jacob, seem to have been the motive of God's gracious command to the Patriarch to remove his settlement and repair to *Bethel*, the place which he had dedicated to his immediate service: for though they had wholly destroyed one colony, there were more people that bordered thereabout, who either in defence of themselves, or in revenge for the cruel and unjust treatment of their country-men, might give the good Patriarch much disquiet, if not utterly destroy him. His Omnipotent God therefore bade him arise and go up to Bethel and dwell there, and erect an altar to God, who appeared to him when he fled from the presence of his incensed brother Esau.

Pursuant to the command of the Almighty, the obedient Patriarch having first strictly charged his family and all that belonged to him, to put away the strange *(i)* Gods, which they had, be *(k)* clean, and change their garments; told them to arise and go up to Bethel, the house of God.

They immediately obeyed the charge and delivered up to him their idols and their *(l)* ear-rings, which, to prevent their being a future snare to draw his family from the worship of the only true God, he privately buried under the oak near unto Shechem, from whence they were ready to depart.

When they proceeded on their journey, God, ever mindful of his promise to his chosen people, to ensure their safety, struck such a terror into the cities round about them, that notwithstanding the provocation given by the massacre at Shechem, none pursued them, and they passed unmolested to Bethel.

(*i*) *Strange Gods.* Some commentators are of opinion that Jacob here referred to the Teraphim, which Rachel had stolen from Laban; while others suppose they were the idols of the Shechemites. However, that they were idols is as certain, as the Patriarchs casting them away was pious.

(*k*) *Be clean.* The original word signifies the washing away of filth by water, in which sense it appears highly commendable in Jacob, on this solemn occasion, to enjoin all under his care, to cleanse themselves from idolatry, and the guilt lately contracted by shedding innocent blood. Besides it was customary for those, who came to appear before the Lord, to wash their clothes: see *Exod.* xix. 10. *Levit.* xvi. 13. 2 *Sam.* xii. 20.

(*l*) *Ear-rings.* These were dedicated to some idol, and worn to render their Gods kind and propitious to them; and, as they thus served the uses of idolatry, we need not wonder they are particularly mentioned by Jacob.

Jacob

Jacob immediately on his arrival, according to the divine command, built an altar, and performed his vow to the most high: the very vow (as generally supposed) which he made when God appeared to him in the same place, as he fled from his brother Esau. Having performed this act of worship, it pleased the Lord again to appear to him, confirm his new name Israel, and give him repeated assurance of his promises made to Abraham and Isaac, with extraordinary blessings to himself.

In token of this signal favour of the Almighty, Jacob erected a pillar of stone, in the very place, where he had been honoured with the divine intercourse, as a perpetual monument of his gratitude and devotion, pouring a drink-offering and oil upon the same. But Jacob tarried not long at Bethel, for urged by filial affection, he set forward toward Mamre, in order to visit his aged father. They intended to have stopped in their way at *(m) Ephrath*, which though not far distant from Bethel, they had not reached before Rachel fell in labour, and having very severe pangs, the midwife to encourage her bade her not fear, for she should have this son also. She was delivered indeed, but died immediately afterwards, having just a moment's space to name the boy, *Benoni* or *son of sorrow*; but his father unwilling to increase the remembrance of so melancholy a cause, called him, *Benjamin*, or *the son of my right hand*, intimating thereby his peculiar affection for this last pledge of his beloved wife.

Jacob, to perpetuate the memory of Rachel, erected a monument over her grave, which remained a great number of years after this event. To add to his excessive grief for the loss of one, to obtain whom he had undergone a long and painful servitude; his son Reuben, before they could reach Mamre, committed incest with Bilhah, his father's concubinary wife; of which, though he took no notice, he retained a painful sense to his dying day, as is evident from a reproachful hint he gave him just before he paid the debt of nature. Though these aggravated griefs sat heavy on his mind, he continued his resolution of visiting his aged parent, pursued his journey, and at length reached Mamre, and came unto the city of *(n) Arbath*, the place of abode both of his grandfather Abraham, and his father Isaac, who, without doubt was overjoyed at the return of his son, as was the son at the sight of his venerable parent. So various are the accidents which befal the best of men in this state of trial, that pious Jacob had not long enjoyed the company of his aged father, before his patience was exercised by a very afflicting circumstance.

His son Joseph being now arrived to the age of seventeen years, was employed with his brethren in feed-

(m) Ephrath. This place was afterwards called *Bethlehem.*

(n) Arbath was afterwards called *Hebron.*

ing the flock: and the lad observing their wicked behaviour had (o) reported the same to his father. This inflamed their resentment against him, and as they thought he was a spy upon them, they determined to remove him from among them.

Their furious rage was greatly inflamed by the extraordinary token of love which his father shewed him, not only because he was the son of his beloved Rachel, but also because he was (p) wise beyond his years. This engaging quality so far wrought upon the fond parent, that to distinguish him from the rest of his children, he bestowed on him a fine vest of (q) many colours, not thinking it would inflame their jealousy and hatred to so excessive a degree.

This token of super-eminence so exasperated Jacob's other sons, that they not only with-held from him the common offices of civility, but devised means to perplex and render him unhappy. This aversion was greatly increased by Joseph's two dreams, which he very innocently related to them, not imagining they were so maliciously disposed towards him, as he afterwards found them to be. The first dream was, "that as he was binding sheaves with his brethren in the field, his sheaf arose, and stood upright, while their sheaves round about fell down; and, as at it were, made obeisance to his."

The brethren replied with scorn, *Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or ſhalt thou indeed have dominion over us?* His second dream which he told them with as inoffensive a design, as he had done the former, still added to their malice, "I have seen (says he) the sun and moon and eleven stars fall down before me." So greatly was he impressed with this event, that he could not conceal it from his father, who, either to appease the anger of his other sons, or check that presumption, which in young minds so naturally arises from good omens, reprimanded him in these words: *Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed, come to bow down ourſelves to thee to the earth?*

Jacob, who was no stranger to these visions finding them thus repeated, stored them up in his memory as predictions of events that would certainly come to pass; and, as he was uneasy with respect to his sons, who were now feeding their flocks in Shechem, the scene of their late cruelties, lest

(o) There is a great variety of opinions concerning the particular nature of the faults which, Joseph had told his father, were committed by his brethren. Some think it was their contentious way of living; others, the sin of Sodomy; others that of bestiality; but whatever it was, it may be gathered from their inveterate malice against him, that it was no small crime, because they hated him even to death.

(p) *Wiſe*, &c. According to the *Hebrew* Text, the motive of Jacob's preferring Joseph to the rest of his children, was because he was son of the elders or senators, that is, he was teacher of his elders and greatly excelled them in genius and capacity: our version can by no means be improper, for, if his love was founded on the motive which that suggests, he must have loved Zebulon, as well as Joseph, since he was of the same age, and Benjamin more, who was born sixteen years after Joseph.

(q) *Many Colours.* Whatever was the quality of this coat, it is plain, that it was composed of divers colours; and as such garments were in high esteem among the eastern nations, and worn by persons of the greatest distinction; this party-coloured dress distinguished him above his brethren and gave rise to their jealousy and hatred.

the inhabitants of the land should take the first favourable opportunity of revenging the death of their countrymen, thought proper to send Joseph to them, though it was near sixty miles distant from Hebron, the place where he now dwelt.

But by this means the pious father became the fatal instrument of delivering his darling child into the hands of his implacable brethren; for Joseph, in obedience to his father's command, went to Shechem, and not finding them there, wandered about till a stranger directed him to Dothan, where, when they saw him afar off, they conspired against him to destroy him, saying one to another, *Behold, this (r) dreamer cometh: Come now, therefore, and let us ſlay him, and caſt him into ſome pit, and we will ſay, ſome evil beaſt hath devoured him: and we ſhall ſee what will become of his dreams.* Reuben, who was less maliciously disposed than the rest, could not approve of the horrid resolution, and being desirous of protecting him from their rage, as he could not devise any open or direct method, persuaded them to cast him into a pit, that he might have an opportunity of delivering him again to his father. The rest, considering that if he perished in the pit, it would answer their end, consented to the advice of Reuben. This resolution was no sooner taken, than the innocent youth, unapprised of their malicious design, came up to them, and as he was about to deliver his father's indulgent counsel to them, they first stripped him of his party-coloured vest, and then cast him into the pit, which was then dry and empty.

Unaffected by this cruel treatment of their brother, they left him to perish in the pit, and without remorse sat down to regale themselves with what provisions the place afforded, certain that he must now inevitably perish with hunger. But the eye of omniscience beheld his distress and pitied his despair, for as Reuben had been already the means of preventing his immediate death, Judah now becomes the means of delivering him out of the pit.

It happened that as hey were refreshing themselves, a company of Ishmaelites, travelling with various merchandise from *Gilead* to *Egypt*, approached, and Judah, availing himself of the opportunity, in order to rescue his brother Joseph from certain death, urged the iniquity of being instrumental to the destruction of their own brother, by which they would contract an eternal stain of guilt; and advised them to sell him to the Ishmaelites, by which means they would not only save his life, but considerably promote their own gain. They immediately consented to Judah's proposal, and dragging Joseph out of the pit, sold him to the (s) *Midianitiſh* Merchants, for twenty pieces of silver,

(r) In the Original it is, Behold this Maker of Dreams cometh; which shews that they considered his dreams as fictions of his own, nay, is confirmed by their future conduct.

(s) *Midianitiſh Merchants.* These were the same with those termed above Ishmaelites.

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and these carrying him to Egypt sold him to *Potiphar* an (*t*) officer of the king, and Captain of his Guards.

Reuben, who was absent when this circumstance happened, having proposed the casting Joseph into the pit in order to save his life, now went thither to see, and doubtless to assist him in making his escape; but astonished at not finding him, he returned to his brethren, (*u*) rent his clothes, and upbraided himself as the cause of his being lost, *The child is not, and whither ſhall I go?* The guilty brethren, to take off all suspicion from themselves, concerted this scheme: they took Joseph's vest, dipped it in the blood of a kid, and sent it to their father with this message; *This have we found; know now whether it be thy ſon's coat or no.* The good old Patriarch was soon convinced to whom the bloody garment belonged, and not suspecting that any human hand could be guilty of such unnatural cruelty, concluded that he had been unhappily devoured by some wild beast. This loss was the most severe that the good old man ever sustained: when his beloved Rachel died, she paid the debt of nature in a natural way; but Joseph (according to his present apprehension) dies by a savage animal, and is barbarously torn in pieces before his time. His grief therefore knows no measure, he puts on sackcloth, and mourns for his beloved son many days; nay, so excessive was his sorrow, that, when his children in general endeavoured to comfort him, he assured them he could only cease to mourn, when he should follow him in the path of mortality. But as circumstances are (*w*) interwoven by the sacred Historian, we must beg leave to defer our further account of Joseph, in order to relate some intervening occurrences, which being material, we cannot pass over unnoticed.

Some time before the late transaction, Jacob's son Judah, had greatly varied from the received custom of his forefathers in marrying a Canaanitish woman, by whom he had three sons, *Er*, *Onan* and *Shelah*.

In process of time when Er, his eldest son, grew up to years of maturity, he took him a wife whose name was *Tamar*. Er, for his abomination in the sight of the Lord, was suddenly taken off, upon which Judah advised Onan, his second son, to marry his brother's widow, in order to preserve the succession of this family.

Onan knowing that if Tamar should bear him any children, the eldest would (*x*) inherit in the name of his elder brother deceased, and therefore

(*t*) *Officer.* This word in the Original signifies an Eunuch, but cannot be taken here literally but figuratively. It was the cuſtom and is still in those parts to commit the keeping of the Queen and Women of Quality to Eunuchs; but Potiphar cannot be supposed to be such, for he had a wife. Besides it was customary among the eastern people, to call the noblemen *Eunuchs*.

(*u*) *Rent his clothes.* This was one of the signs of ancient mourning, and used in cases of the greatest distress. From this behaviour of Reuben, it is most reasonable to conclude, that he was absent, and consequently not privy to the transaction of selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites.

(*w*) *Interwoven*, &c. Though the late and following events seem to be connected by the sacred Writer, the marriage of Judah, of whom we are now about to speak, happened sometime before Joseph was sold into Egypt; though it is related by Moses after that event.

(*x*) *Inherit*, &c. This was long before the Law, by which it was injoined; yet, though this is the first mention we have of it, it seems it was then a known custom, and well understood even by young Onan.

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not be accounted as his, pretended to follow his father's counsel, by going into Tamar's chamber, but came out without following the instinct of nature. But this crime was so provoking to the Almighty, that the same judgment was inflicted upon him, as had been upon his brother.

Shelah, his third son, being as yet too young for procreation, Judah desired his daughter in-law, Tamar, to retire to her father's house, and there remain a widow till he should grow up, when he should marry her.

Tamar accordingly retired; and in process of time *Shuah*, Judah's wife, died, and Shelah arrived at man's estate; but waiting a long time in vain the performance of Judah's promise, Tamar determined on revenge for her disappointment.

Being told at a certain time, that her father-in-law was going up to Timnath, to shear his sheep; she took off her widow's garment, disguised herself in the habit of a harlot, and sat herself in an open path, through which she knew Judah must necessarily pass in his way to Timnath.

When Judah beheld her, he took her to be a prostitute, and as such desired intercourse with her. She denied not his request, but demanded of him the terms; he promised her a kid, and the woman having a further design upon him, required a security for the fulfilment of the terms, which by their mutual agreement were to be his ring or signet, *(y)* his bracelets and his staff. The pledges being delivered, they went together, and she conceived by him.

Judah had no sooner departed than she retired, and having put off her disguised dress, re-assumed her widow's habit, which she had no sooner done, but her deceived father-in-law went to his flock, took a kid, and sent it by his friend *Hirah* the Adullamite to redeem the pledge.

Hirah, seeking her in vain, returned and told Judah; who, therefore determined to let her keep the pledge, lest the discovery of his connection with her might bring him into disgrace.

In the course of about three months, Judah was informed, that Tamar, his daughter-in-law, had played the harlot, and was with child by whoredom; when he, resenting the dishonour she had brought upon his family, and unmindful of his late folly and wickedness, ordered her to be brought forth, and publicly *(z)* burnt.

When she was brought forth, she produced the pledge, and sent it to her father-in-law, assuring him at the same time, that the man to whom those things belonged, was the very person by whom she was with child.

(y) *Bracelet.* The Hebrew word signifies a scarf, or girdle. The Chaldee renders it a handkerchief, but it is variously translated by the Syriac and Arabic. Some translate it *something twisted;* it seems to have been a girdle made of gold, twisted in the manner of thread, and suspended from the neck, and not like a bracelet from the arm.

(z) *Burnt.* If it be asked by what authority, *Tamar's* father-in-law passed sentence, we thus reply. The ancients supposed every man to be judge or chief magistrate in his own family; so that though Tamar was a Canaanite, yet, as she had married into Judah's family and brought disgrace upon it, she necessarily lay under the cognizance of him, who may be supposed from what followed to have suspended the sentence, till he had enquired into the cause of her being with child.

Judah, convinced of the deception, acknowledged the pledge, and reflecting on the injustice he had done her, in with-holding from her his son, whom he had promised her in marriage, transferred the crime upon himself, by declaring that she had been more (*a*) righteous than him.

When the time of her travail arrived, she was delivered of twins, one of which putting out his hand, his midwife bound it with a scarlet thread by way of distinction as the first-born; but, he drawing back his hand, his brother came forth, whereupon he was called *Pharez*, which signifies an *irruption* or *breach*, and the other with the thread on his hand, (*b*) *Zara*. Thus, instead of the son raising up issue to the deceased brother, the father incestuously raised issue to the deceased son, but shocked at the horrid crime, he abandoned all future converse with that subtle woman.

CHAP.

(*a*) *Righteous*, &c. He does not say Tamar was more holy or chaste, but more righteous or just, that is, Judah, not keeping his promise in marrying her to Shelah, provoked her to lay this trap for him, resolving, since he would not let her have children by Shelah, she would have them by him: thus, though she may be deemed more wicked in the sight of God, she appeared more just in the judgment of Judah.

(*b*) *Zara*; that is, *the ariseth*, because he had given a sign of his coming, by putting out his hand.

CHAP. X.

DEATH OF ISAAC. JOSEPH IS ADVANCED IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE. RESISTS THE TEMPTATION OF HIS MISTRESS. IS FALSLY ACCUSED AND IMPRISONED. FINDS FAVOUR IN THE SIGHT OF THE KEEPER, WHO COMMITS TO HIM THE CHARGE OF TWO OF PHARAOH'S PRINCIPAL OFFICERS. INTERPRETS THEIR DREAMS. INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S AND IS THEREBY GREATLY PROMOTED. BEGETS CHILDREN. A FAMINE SUCCEEDS THE SEVEN YEARS PLENTY. JOSEPH'S BRETHREN ARRIVE IN EGYPT, AND ARE IMPRISONED BY HIM, BUT SENT BACK ON LEAVING ONE AS A PLEDGE AND PROMISING TO BRING TO HIM THEIR YOUNGEST BROTHER BENJAMIN.

WHEN Joseph was first sold into Egypt, his grandfather was living, but died in the course of the event that followed, being an hundred and eight years old, having lived longer than any since *Terah*. The good old Patriarch was buried by his sons Esau and Jacob, in the cave that is in the field of *Macpelah*, which Abraham had purchased of Ephron, for a burying place for his family.

But with the sacred writer, we now resume our history, which has been interrupted by the transactions rela-

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tive to Judah's family, and observe, that Joseph in process of time, by his faithful service so obtained the favour of *Potiphar* his master, that he not only dismissed him from every laborious office, but made him overseer of his whole property, and committed the charge of his house to his sole care and direction.

Joseph being thus appointed sole director of the concerns of Potiphar both within and without doors, the Lord was pleased to command a blessing on the house of the Egyptian, who flourished extremely, and daily increased in his good offices towards his faithful servant.

Thus situated, Joseph had reason to hope for a comfortable life, though sold to slavery, and await his liberty as the reward of his truth and fidelity: but it pleased God farther to exercise his faith and patience, in order to prepare him for a still brighter display of his grace and goodness towards his chosen people.

Joseph was of a very comely form, sweet complexion, and winning deportment: these united charms in process of time attracted the notice and excited the love of his master's wife, who, when all tacit tokens to draw the youth into an indulgence of her unlawful flame failed, was so fired by her eager passion, that she broke through every rule of decency, and in plain terms courted him to her bed. In a short time, an opportunity offered (as vice seldom fails of assisting its servants,): It happened one day, that Potiphar being in waiting on the king, and the rest of the servants employed about their work in the field, none but the comely Hebrew and his wanton mistress were left in the house.

When Joseph therefore came into the room where she was sitting, she again attacked him, and in plain terms asked him to lie with her. The innocent youth startled at such an attack from one of her sex and quality, to avoid the commission of so disingenuous a crime, expostulated with her on its horrid and aggravated nature, having given a positive denial: *but he refused, and said unto his master's wife; behold my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*

But this repulse, sufficient to have filled with shame a mind not entirely lost to honour and virtue, had no effect on this lewd woman, whose desire grew so vehement, that she caught him by his garment, and again importuned him to lie with her; Joseph therefore, having no other means of escaping from her, left his cloak in her hand and fled.

Finding his virtue unconquerable, and fearing the disgrace that would attend the discovery of her shameful passion, as well as determined to revenge the denial, she came to a resolution of laying the charge upon him, to prevent its falling upon herself: feigning therefore a prodigious outcry and uncommon surprize, and holding at the same time Joseph's garment

garment in her hand, those servants, who were nearest the house immediately ran to her assistance; upon which she vehemently exclaimed, *see he hath brought in an (c)* Hebrew *unto us to mock us: he came unto me, to be with me*, and further to engage them in her cause, when the affair should come to examinations, craftily added, *and I cried with a loud voice; and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.*

Having thus prepared the servants to confirm her declaration she laid the cloak by her, to produce it as an evidence against him on her lord's return. Potiphar had no sooner entered the house, than she most violently exclaimed against the dishonour offered her by his Hebrew servant; upon which the credulous husband, without the least enquiry into the merit of the cause, immediately committed him to the king's prison.

Nor did a covenant-keeping God desert his faithful servant under this cloudy scene; for thus bereft of friend, relation, and every kind of assistance, he received the clearest intimation of divine favour, and grew so highly in the esteem of the gaoler, that he committed all the prisoners to his care, and gave him, as his master had done before, the sole direction of all his concerns. This conduct of the prison-keeper was indeed founded on the same motive as that of Potiphar, for he, as well as the other observed the extraordinary success with which God crowned all his undertakings.

While Joseph was confined, it happened that the king's chief *(d)* butler and baker were committed to the same prison, and being delivered to the care of Joseph, he attended them in person, and thereby contracted an intimacy with them. On one and the same night, they each of them dreamed a very extraordinary dream, and being much affected with the same, Joseph demanded of them the cause of their melancholy? and they told him they had each dreamed a dream that night, and being in prison could procure no interpreter.

Joseph, to take off their minds from a reliance on the vain superstitions that prevailed in the country of the Egyptians, who in such cases trusted to diviners and soothsayers, having in a kind of appeal to them, given them to understand that the interpretation of dreams belonged unto God, desired to know their dreams. The butler told him he dreamt he saw a vine that had three branches, which budded by degrees, then blossomed, and at length brought forth ripe grapes, that he held Pharaoh's cup in his hand, pressed the juice into the same, and gave it to the king to drink. Joseph thus interpreted the dream;

(c) She called not Joseph by his own name, but that of his people (an Hebrew), to inflame them the more against him: for the Egyptians most inveterately hated the Hebrews.

(d) *Butler*, &c. It is evident from the sacred Writings that these men held considerable posts in the King's household. *Diodorus Siculus* confirms this assertion by affirming, that no home-born slaves were admitted to serve the Kings of Egypt, but all their Officers were sons of their most illustrious priests.

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"The three branches denote three days, within which Pharaoh will restore thee to thy place, and thou shalt, as usual, give him to drink according to the duty of thine office."

All that the interpreter required for so agreeable a presage was, that he would remember him, when restored, and intercede with the king for his enlargement from a confinement inflicted upon him without any just cause. The other officer prompted by the happy interpretation he had already given, proceeded to tell him that he dreamt he had three white baskets upon his head; in the uppermost of which was all manner of baked meats for the king's table, and the birds eat them out of the baskets that was upon his head. Joseph readily interpreted his dream thus; "The three baskets are three days, at the end of which thou shalt have thy head *(e)* taken off, and then be hanged on a tree, where the birds shall eat thy flesh." Joseph's interpretation was soon verifyed; for in the space of three days, the butler was restored to his former office, and the baker hanged; but the former proved ungrateful, and unmindful of his promise; insomuch that a considerable space intervened, between the time of his being restored, and Joseph's enlargement and promotion in Pharaoh's house, which happened in consequence of the following incident.

When Joseph had been upwards of two years in prison, Pharaoh dreamt, that, as he stood by the river *Nile*, there came up out of the river, seven fat kine, and they fed among the *(f)* flags; after which he saw seven others extremely lean and hagged, and the latter devoured the former.

This dream awoke the king, but he did not long ruminate upon it before he slept and dreamed that he saw seven full ears of corn shoot from one stalk; and soon after seven thin and blighted ears sprang up, which likewise devoured those that were good and plenteous.

Pharaoh awaking in great surprise and concern, sent for all the magicians and wise men, and told them his dreams, but none amongst them all could interpret one of them. Finding the king in the utmost perplexity concerning so extraordinary an event, the butler at length remembered Joseph, and informed Pharaoh that, when he and his fellow-servant laboured under his majesty's displeasure, they both dreamed in the prison, where a young man, an Hebrew servant to the captain of the guard, interpreted each of their dreams exactly answerable to the event.

The anxious king, pleased with the information of an able interpreter, immediately sent for Joseph, who was brought out of prison, and after having put on proper attire, waited

(e) *Taken off.* Though it may appear strange, that the sacred historian asserts, the baker was beheaded first and hanged afterward; *Philo* observes it was customary to behead a criminal and then hang him up. *Jeremiah* also confirms this assertion, when he laments, that "the primes were hanged up by their hands," which intimates that they had lost their heads before.

(f) *Flags.* The word, which we translate *Meadow*, signifies a *Flag*, which, according to St. *Jerom*, was a common name given to every vegetable that grows in a marshy place.

upon his majesty, who, impatient to hear the event, told him without any prelude, that he had dreamed two dreams which none of his wise men could expound, and had therefore sent for him, as he was informed that he was skilful in the art of interpreting.

Joseph, having informed him that the power was of God and not of himself, told him he should receive an agreeable interpretation of the dreams.

Pharaoh then related his dreams, as already recounted, and Joseph told him they both implied one and the same thing, that it was the will of God thereby to remind him of future events.

The dreams he interpreted in this manner:

"The seven fat kine and full ears, denote seven years of plenty: the seven lean kine and withered ears, seven years of famine which were to succeed; and upon the whole, that there would be seven fruitful years followed by seven years so very barren and unfruitful, that the remembrance of plenty should be lost throughout the land of Egypt, and absolute famine universally prevail, and that the double dream was to assure him of the certainty of the awful event."

Having thus interpreted the king's dream to his utmost satisfaction, though no small concern: Joseph takes upon him the office of a counsellor, and advises him to improve the hints given in the dreams, by selecting some wise and honest minister, who under him might be vested with full power to appoint proper offices in every city and town throughout his dominions; in order to lay up the fifth part of the general produce of the seven years plenty in proper granaries, which reserve should be at the king's disposal, and secured against the seven years famine.

Such benevolent as well as provident care and counsel, immediately obtained the approbation of the king, who, struck with the extraordinary foresight and sagacity of Joseph, hesitated not long in fixing the minister thus proposed; for turning first to his subjects, and then to Joseph, he thus addressed them respectively. *Can we find such a one as this is; a man in whom the Spirit of God is? Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house; and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

As a confirmation of his exalted promotion, and to give his people a sense of the duty they owed him; he took the ring off his own hand, and putting it on Joseph's, vested him with every ensign of royalty; causing him to ride in the second chariot; and ordering his heralds to proclaim before him *(g) bow the knee*, as a token of honour and subjection to him, as a chief governor of Egypt.

(g) The word *Abrech* which we render, *bow the knee*, is of uncertain signification. *Some* render it *Saviour of the World*, some *tender Father*; and others *bow the knee*, which certainly is most proper in this place, being a token of honour and subjection to Joseph, now appointed chief governor of Egypt.

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Having thus bestowed on him the greatest power and highest honours; to attach him more strongly to his interest, Pharaoh changes his name from Joseph to *(h) Zaphnath panneah*, and procures him an honourable alliance, by marriage with *Arſanath*, the daughter of *Potipherah (i)* Priest of *On*.

The seven plenteous years commencing soon after his promotion, Joseph entered on his office of inspector-general of provisions throughout the kingdom of Egypt; and making a circuit, reserved all the food that could be spared from the absolute demands of present use in storehouses appointed for that necessary purpose.

The same method he invariably pursued every season of the fruitful years, till he had amassed such quantities of provisions, as even to exceed computation.

During the time of plenty, two sons were born to Joseph, the eldest of whom he called *(k) Manaſſeh*, and the younger *(l) Ephraim*.

The seven years of plenty being expired, the seven years of dearth commenced, according to Joseph's prediction, and spread not only throughout the land of Egypt, but also to the neighbouring countries; but through Joseph's provident care, under the blessing of Divine Providence, Egypt was well furnished with provision, insomuch that application was made to Pharaoh not only by his own subjects, but foreigners, for bread and other necessaries of life.

The king referred all that applied to him to Joseph, who opened the store-houses, and sold to the Egyptians and others, in such quantities and at such rates as seemed to him most just and equitable.

The famine having raged more than a year in Jacob's country, ten of Joseph's brethren, at the instigation of their father, came from *Canaan* to Egypt to buy corn, as they felt the effects of the dearth more severely than the Egyptians, who had corn laid up in store.

On their arrival, their business necessarily brought them before Joseph, who had the entire superintendence of the disposal of the corn: when they approached him therefore, they (*m*) bowed as a token of reverence to his dignified office. Joseph no sooner saw them than he knew them to be his brethren; but chusing to try the effect of severity in bringing them to a due sense of their unnatural behaviour towards him, abrubtly demanded of them, whence

(*h*) *Zaphnath-panneah*, that is, *Revealer of Secrets*. It was customary for princes to give foreigners a new name, to denote their naturalization, to take away all invidious distinction, and declare them worthy of their most intimate favour. See *Dan.* i. 7.

(*i*) *Prieſt of On*. The word translated priest, signifies also the friend and privy counsellor of the king; and the *Chaldee* renders it here *Prince of On*. Some *Engliſh* translations render it *Prince* in the text, and set *Prieſt* in the margin; and the last translation to it, renders it *Prieſt* in the text, and sets *Prince* in the margin.

(*k*) *Manaſſeh* or *Forgetfulneſs*, for he said, *God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's houſe*.

(*l*) *Ephraim*, or *Fruitful*, alluding to the words which immediately follow, *God hath cauſed me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction*.

(*m*) *Bowed*, &c. Thus was fulfilled the first of Joseph's dreams, concerning the subjection of his brethren to him, in future times.

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they came? and, on their replying, "from the land of Canaan to buy provisions," he charged them with being spies, who came thither to make discovery of the (*n*) nakedness of the country.

They assured him they came upon no such design, but merely to buy corn; and to enforce their declaration, added, (*o*) that they were all one man's sons, which had been twelve formerly, but now were there only ten, the youngest being with their father, and the next to him dead.

But Joseph still insisted that they were spies, and to try them, put the charge upon this issue. "Ye say, said he, ye have a younger brother, agree upon one of you to go and fetch him, and ye shall be kept in prison the mean time, that I may be satisfied whether what ye say be true; otherwise as sure as Pharaoh lives, I shall look upon you as spies."

He then committed them to custody for three days, in order to consult what was best to be done, and on the third day advised them to comply with his injunction; assuring them that he was actuated by the fear of God; *this do and live, for I fear God:* and farther to assure them of his unwillingness, that their families should suffer for their faults, or that they should suffer if they were innocent, he added, *if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses, but bring your youngest brother unto me, so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die.*

Being reduced to a state of extremity, and knowing it vain to remonstrate with one, under whose immediate power they were, they unanimously agreed to the proposal; while their present situation reminded them of the state of their brother, who might probably be dead, or under miserable circumstances; and they began to reproach one another with the same, in terms to this effect, "Justly do we now suffer for our cruelty to our brother, to whom we refused mercy, though he begged it in the anguish of his soul, therefore God is just in sending upon us this distress."

Reuben now took occasion to remind them of the consequence of their not attending to his desire and advice; *Spake not I unto you, saying, do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? therefore behold also his blood is required.* It is to be observed, that Joseph before had spoken to them by an interpreter; and they therefore knew not that he understood their language; but now as he heard and understood their discourse, though the interpreter was absent, he was so affected with their

(*n*) *Nakedness.* That is to observe the fortifications, and remark the weakness or nakedness of the land. *Herodotus* observes that Joseph's brethren entered Egypt through those passages, by which alone it was liable to be invaded.

(*o*) *That they were all one man's sons,* &c. As if they had said, "We are no spies, but all the sons of one man, and surely it cannot be suspected that any person would send all his children on so dangerous a design.

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case, that he was obliged to withdraw, that unseen, he might give way to his affectionate tears.

When he returned to them again, he caused *Simeon* to be bound in their sight, and having set the rest at liberty, ordered their sacks to be filled with corn, and every man's money to be put in his sack; he then dismissed them.

When they came to the inn, where they sojourned the first night; one of them opening his sack to give his ass provender, observed his money in the mouth of it, and being surprized, acquainted his brethren with the unexpected event. When they beheld the money, they looked confusedly at one another, and esteeming this an additional judgment of God upon them, cried out, *what is this that God hath done unto us?* In due time however through the clemency and kindness of their unknown brother, they reached the much desired land of Canaan.

CHAP. XI.

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN RELATE TO THEIR FATHER THE PARTICULARS OF THEIR ADVENTURES. JACOB IS WITH MUCH DIFFICULTY PREVAILED ON TO SEND BENJAMIN INTO EGYPT. JOSEPH'S BRETHREN ARRIVE IN EGYPT, AND ARE KINDLY ENTERTAINED BY HIM. JOSEPH'S DEVICE TO PROLONG THE STAY OF HIS BRETHREN. HE AT LENGTH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO THEM, AND SENDS FOR HIS AGED FATHER, WHO IS REJOICED AT THE NEWS OF SO UNEXPECTED AN EVENT.

THE sons of Jacob being arrived at the habitation of their venerable father, with eagerness of impatience told him the particulars of their journey, but especially the reception they had met from the viceroy of Egypt; who, having charged them with being spies, and they being wholly incapable in a strange country of clearing themselves, had obliged them to leave Simeon behind in prison, as a pledge, till they should bring *Benjamin*, on which terms alone their innocence could be justified, or they obtain liberty of carrying on any traffic in the land of Egypt.

This news greatly affected the good old Patriarch, who was already bereft of two of his children, and now on the point of losing his youngest son Benjamin. To increase his concern, when they emptied their sacks, every man's money was found in his sack, from whence they all feared, that this circumstance might afford fresh matter of accusation and hinder their clearing themselves of the charge alledged against them. But the case was urgent: Reuben therefore to prevail with his father to consent to the departure of Benjamin, desired him to commit the care of this darling child to him, engaging on the penalty of losing his own two children, to restore him in safety.

But this proposal had little weight with the affectionate Patriarch, who answered him in a manner remarkably pathetic, and which paints him to us in an attitude of grief lamenting the loss of his children in the most melting terms of paternal fondness, *my son shall not go down with you, for*

his (p) brother is dead, and he is left alone; if miſchief befal him by the way in the which he go, then ſhall ye bring down my grey heirs with ſorrow to the grave.

In this state of doubt and perplexity they passed their time, till their stock being exhausted, their father desired them to repair to Egypt in order to replenish, taking no notice of the injunction the viceroy had laid upon them, not to presume to approach him more without their brother Benjamin.

His sons knowing that their departure without him would not only argue in them the greatest folly and rashness, but also expose them to the resentment of the second person in the kingdom; and, at the same time, thinking it impossible to bring their father to consent, were reduced to the utmost dilemma. Reuben had tried his efforts in vain; Judah therefore addressed him in more positive terms, urging at once the absolute and indispensable necessity of carrying Benjamin with them; "as the viceroy had most solemnly declared, they should not so much as see his face, if they brought not their brother Benjamin with them."

The poor old man, thus reduced to a straight, in the fulness of his soul, reproves his sons for acquainting the man that they had a brother. And they in excuse told him, "that he enquired so minutely into their circumstances and family, that they could not possibly avoid it: nay, he even asked, if they had another brother, and whether their father was living; and added moreover, that they had no reason to suppose he would have obliged them to bring their brother with them."

Judah now observing his father in some kind of doubt, repeats the necessity of their return, and forcibly urges him to consent; *ſend the lad with me, and we will ariſe and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and alſo our little ones: I will be ſurety for him, of my hand ſhalt thou require him, if I bring him not unto thee, and ſet him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.*

Affection at length submitted to necessity, which wrought the good old man into compliance; he therefore advised them, *as it muſt be ſo*, to take some of the most valuable commodities of the country, such as balm, spices, myrrh and almonds, together with double money in their sacks (lest the price of what they had already brought away should be demanded) and their brother Benjamin; adding, for their success, this fervent and pious prayer, *and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may ſend away your other brother, and* Benjamin. And taking his leave of them, affectionately said, *if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.*

Thus patiently acquiescing with the will of Heaven, he dismissed them, who according to his advice,

(p) *Brother*, &c. His only brother, by the mother Rachel, his beloved wife; Joseph and Benjamin, being the only children deſcended from Rachel.

having

having taken double money, a present to appease the incensed viceroy, departed with their brother Benjamin, being animated with the hope of appearing in Egypt with honour and credit.

Immediately on their arrival, they were presented to the viceroy, who, observing his favourite Benjamin among them, commanded his steward to conduct them into the house, and provide suitable entertainment, as he intended they should dine with him. In obedience to his master's command, the steward conducted them in, and observing their fear, enquired the cause; and when they told him it arose from a suspicion, that they were detained for the sake of the money which was left in their sacks at the late departure, he bade them fear nothing, for it was their God and the God of their fathers, who had put that treasure into their sacks, and in order to comfort them, brought forth their brother Simeon, and gave orders for them to betreated with the utmost civility.

As the steward had informed them they were to dine with the viceroy, they prepared their presents, which, when he entered, they offered with the lowest prostration.

Joseph saluted them with the utmost cordiality, anxiously inquiring concerning the welfare of the good old man. They submissively replied; *thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive.* Though Joseph addressed his brethren in general terms, his attention was chiefly fixed upon his brother Benjamin, who was most near and dear to him; he therefore enquired of them, if he was the younger brother, whom they had mentioned? And without waiting for an answer, thus saluted him; *God be gracious unto thee, my son.* His affection was now wrought to such a pitch, that unable to contain the flood of tears that was ready to gush, he retired hastily into his chamber, in order to give vent to the excess of his passion.

When he had dried his tears, and washed his face, that it might not appear that he had wept, he returned to them very cheerfully, and ordered the provision to be brought upon table; Joseph, on account of his exalted station, sat by himself, provision having been prepared for his brethren by themselves, and also for the Egyptians, who were to dine with him by themselves, for the Egyptians disdained (*q*) to eat with the Hebrews, who were employed in the humble state of a pastoral life.

The brethren were placed in rank exactly according to their respective ages, a circumstance which not a little (*r*) surprized them: thus placed, Joseph sent each of them a mess from his own table; but to Benjamin he sent a mess containing five times as much as any of the rest; however

(*q*) *To eat*, &c. The enmity which subsisted between the Egyptians and Hebrews, arose not, as some have imagined, from the latter's eating animal food, but from their low degree in life, being shepherds, an employment, despised by the Egyptians, though esteemed by the Hebrews.

(*r*) *Surprized them.* As they knew not their brother Joseph, they might well marvel, by what means he could attain to so exact a knowledge of their respective ages.

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they were all refreshed and cheerfully regaled. Jacob's sons, being thus cordially received, and generously entertained, had reason to banish their fears and encourage their hopes: but a cloud yet hung over them; for though Joseph from his ardent love towards his brother Benjamin immediately desired to make himself known; yet he deferred it some time longer, in order to accomplish a scheme, that might again perplex and remind them of the cruel manner in which they had formerly treated him, as well as try their affection towards his darling brother Benjamin.

To effect this design, he ordered his steward to fill their sacks with corn, and to put every man's money in his sack; but to put into the sack of the youngest, not only his money, but the silver cup, out of which he used to drink. This done, early the next morning they proceeded on their journey homeward; but were not far advanced, when Joseph ordered his steward to pursue, and reproach them with the highest ingratitude, in carrying off the particular cup, out of which his Lord drinketh, and (*s*) divineth.

Concious of their innocence, they were not affected by the charge, and, as a test of their integrity, reminded the steward of their bringing back the money which they found in the mouths of their sacks: nay, so confident were they of their probity, that to obviate even a suspicion, they offered to stand search under the severest penalties: *With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my Lord's bond-men.*

The steward took them at their word, but softened the penalty, fixing it, that he on whom the cup should be found, should be his servant, and the rest (*t*) blameless.

Impatient to prove their innocence, every one hastily unloaded his beast, and, as they opened their sacks, the steward searched them, and beginning at the eldest, and proceeding on to the youngest, found the cup in Benjamin's sack.

Here was an absolute conviction without the shadow of guilt; yet in vain did the poor youth pretend to a defence against evident demonstration. Benjamin's life, at least his liberty, was forfeited by mutual agreement. They rent therefore their clothes, and without attempting even to palliate the fact, loaded their asses, and returned to the city.

Joseph had remained at home, expecting the event, and when they approached his presence, they fell to the ground in a most sorrowful submission.

Without giving them time to offer a word in their own defence, Joseph charged them with the fact, and their

(*s*) *Divineth.* As this was a common drinking cup, and not one used in libations and divinations, is expresly asserted; it follows therefore that the word translated, *divineth*, is improperly rendered; if it will admit of any other acceptation: and that it doth admit of another acceptation, appears from *Gen.* xxx. 27, and 1, *Kings* xx. 33. in both which places it signifies, to try, search, or make experiment. The sense then in this place must be, that it was a trial of their honesty, or rather an experiment or proof of their dishonesty.

(*t*) *Blameless.* The Hebrew word, signifies *innocent* or *faultless*.

folly

folly in committing it without the least prospect of concealment; *What deed is this ye have (u) done?* Wot ye not that such a man as I can (w) certainly divine? In the midst of a general horror, Judah, in an humble tone, cries out to this effect, "We have nothing to offer in our defence; God hath detected our iniquity, and we must remain slaves with him in whose sack the cup was found."

Joseph interrupted him by declaring that he could by no means do such injustice; for that he only who stole the cup should be his slave, while the rest of them should return home to their father.

Judah, finding the Viceroy somewhat softened, was encouraged to approach him nearer, and represented to him, in a very pathetic manner, the case between them and their father, relative to their bringing their brother Benjamin into Egypt, passionately describing the old man's extraordinary affection for this child of his age; the regret with which he parted from him, the inconsolable loss that would result from his being detained, and the curses he would pronounce to them in his departing moments, for depriving him of what he held most dear.

To this striking representation he added, *Now therefore I pray thee, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bond-man to my Lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren; for how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.*

This pathetic address struck Joseph to the very soul. Ordering therefore all the rest to depart, that he might discover himself with more affectionate freedom: he burst into tears, and pathetically exclaimed, *I am* Joseph; *Doth my father live?* ——What a beautiful transition! His soul was so full of filial affection for the good old man, that before he had finished his sentence, he inquired after him, though they had before told him he was alive.

Conscious guilt, at the very name of that Joseph, whom they had so unnaturally treated, struck them dumb, as they now dreaded the power he had to resent the injuries they had done him. But brotherly love overcame resentment, and banished every desire of revenge; for Joseph observing the confusion of his brethren, in the most endearing accents bids them approach, assuring them, he was the very brother they had sold in Egypt; and though he had assumed the dignity becoming his office, he still retained the tenderness of a brother; and lest their fear should prevail, he desired them no longer to afflict themselves with remorse for their former behaviour towards him since it was the means by which a wise Providence was pleased to dispose of him for their preservation.

(u) *Wot ye not, &c.* The word wot, is derived from the saxon *witan to know*, it should therefore be rendered, according to the present mode of writing, *know ye not?*

(w) *Certainly divine.* "Know ye not that I can certainly divine?" as if he had said, "You see by my office, that I am one of the great ministers of state; while the other diviners are preferred only from the college of priests; as I am therefore superior to them, could you be insensible that it was in my power to divine, or detect your robbery?"

He then proposed that they should bring his father, and the whole family of Israel out of Canaan into Egypt; and, as an inducement to them to leave their own country, desired them from him to address their Father to this effect; "God hath made me Lord of all Egypt, therefore defer not coming; for I will provide (*x*) *Goshen* for the place of thy habitation, and there will I nourish thee, and thy family, lest they come to want."

Lest they might (*r*) doubt that he was indeed their brother Joseph, he told them, *your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother* Benjamin, *(whom my Father will especially regard) that it is I myself that speak to you. And to comfort my Father, tell him of my glory here, and all that you have seen; and make haste and conduct him hither.*

Then taking Benjamin in his arms, they wept for joy; and, as a seal of pardon for all offences, he tenderly embraced, kissed them severally, and wept over them. Joseph's kind carriage and reconciliation having dispelled their fears and apprehensions of the severe resentment they might justly have expected from him, they took heart, and conversed familiarly with him.

The report of the arrival of Joseph's brethren soon spread in Pharaoh's court, which, for the great respect all had to Joseph, was very agreeable to the king and all about him; who immediately orders Joseph to send his brethren to conduct his father, and all that belonged to him, into Egypt, where he should share of the best during the famine, of which there were five years to come.

Joseph gladly obeys, and accordingly provides carriages and food for their journey. But for a present to his father, he sent ten asses laden with the choicest dainties Egypt afforded, and ten she asses laden with corn and provisions for him by the way. To cheer his brethren, and confirm his love to them, he gave to each of them changes of raiment; but to distinguish Benjamin from the rest, he gave him three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes or suits of clothes: and knowing their quarrelsome disposition, and fearing they should enter into some debate who was most in fault for the injury done to him, he lays a strict charge upon them, not to fall out by the way.

Joseph having dismissed his brethren, they make the best of their way to Canaan, where they were joyfully received by their good old Father, especially upon the return of his two sons, Simeon and Benjamin, whom he scarce expected to see again. But when they acquainted him with Joseph's being alive, and the grandeur he lived in, his former grief revived, and distrusting the ex-

(*x*) *Goshen:* This was the most fruitful part of all Egypt, especially for pasturage; and therefore the most commodious for them, who were brought up shepherds.

(*r*) *Doubt.* Joseph having before spoken to them by an interpreter, he bids them observe that now he spoke to them in the *Hebrew* tongue, they might the better be assured that it was he their brother that had hitherto conversed with them.

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travagant account they gave, he had like to have died: but when he saw the carriages with the presents and provisions Joseph had sent for him, his fainting spirits, like an oil-spent lamp opportunely supplied, revived, and in an ecstasy of joy, he cried out, "This is beyond my expectation: my son Joseph yet alive! I will go and see him before I die." Accordingly he took his journey with all that he had; and stopping at (*s*) Beer-sheba, he offered sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac. Here it was God spake to Israel in the visions of the night, bidding him fear not to go down into (*t*) Egypt, for he would there make of him a great nation; that he would go with him, and surely (*u*) bring him thence again, and that his beloved Joseph should there (*w*) close his eyes.

Jacob encouraged by this divine promise left Beer-sheba, and cheerfully pursues his journey towards Egypt; his sons carrying with them their little-ones and their wives in the waggons which Pharaoh had sent to convey them.

They took also with them their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, his sons and his sons' sons, his (*x*) daughters and his sons' daughters, making in all (*y*) seventy persons.

Jacob being arrived on the borders of Egypt, dispatches his son Judah before him, to receive directions for going to *Goshen*; who soon returns to his father, and conducts him thither; where Joseph, with a train becoming his high station, meets him, and with infinite satisfaction congratulates his happy arrival in a place where he had power to make the rest of his life easy and comfortable.

Here were the highest ecstasies of filial duty and parental affection expressed: tears of joy flowed on both sides; and whilst Joseph was contemplating the divine goodness that had restored him once more to the sight of his aged father, the pious Patriarch

(*s*) *Beer-sheba.* Here it was, where the Lord appeared to his father Isaac, and blessed him, and where his father built an altar, and worshipped the Lord, *Gen.* xxvi. 23, 24, 25. But by Jacob's offering sacrifice here, it may reasonably be supposed that so religious a man as he was, not only gave God thanks for the preservation of his son Joseph, and safe return of his other sons, but implored the divine protection and blessing upon him and his, in the journey he had now undertaken.

(*t*) *Egypt.* Though God had promised the land of Canaan to Israel's posterity, yet he persuades him to go into Egypt, (though a country where his ancestors had been ill treated) for he would protect him.

(*u*) *Bring*, &c. That is, not that he should live to come out of Egypt, but that his body should be carried from thence to be buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors, and that his posterity should possess the promised land, from which he was departed. For as to Israel's dying in Egypt, it is plain, that God at the time of this vision told him he should die there, *Gen.* xlvi. 4. for there Joseph is promised to close his eyes.

(*w*) *Close.* From hence Jacob might justly infer that he should die a natural death, and that his son Joseph should be with him to the last moment of his life; which was a great comfort to the fond old Patriarch.

(*x*) *Daughters.* This will admit of a two-fold meaning: first, as it was a general way of speaking, such as Sarah used when she said, *who should have said to* Abraham *that* Sarah *should have given suck to children? Gen.* xxi. 7. whereas she never gave suck but to one child, Isaac. Secondly, though Jacob strictly had but one daughter, which was Dinah, yet here he may be understood to speak of his daughters-in-law.

(*y*) The names of Jacob's family, which he brought with him into Egypt, are particularly expressed, *Gen.* xlvi. 8. to 25. And both here and *Deut.* x. 22. are computed to be in the whole number threescore and ten persons.

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thinking his joy on earth complete, desired to live no longer: "Now, *says he*, let me die, since I have seen thy face."

CHAP. XII.

JOSEPH INTRODUCES HIS FATHER AND BRETHREN TO THE KING, WHO RECEIVES THEM GRACIOUSLY, AND APPOINTS THEM AMPLE MAINTAINANCE. JACOB'S CHARGE. HE BLESSES EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH, THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH. BLESSES HIS SONS IN PARTICULAR, AND HAVING GIVEN THEM CHARGE CONCERNING HIS BURIAL, DIES. JACOB'S BURIAL. JOSEPH PREDICTS THE RETURN OF HIS BRETHREN AND DIES.

AFTER these mutual endearments, Joseph proposes to his father and brethren that he would acquaint the king with their arrival; which, he was in gratitude obliged to do, since the king had sent for them, instructing them at the same time that he would acquaint him with their manner of life, which was in breeding and nourishing cattle, that if he should enquire of them what occupation they were bred to, they should answer accordingly; by which they would secure the land of Goshen for their use, where they might live and take care of their flocks and herds by themselves; for the Egyptians did so abominate shepherds, that they would never suffer them to live promiscuously amongst them.

Taking therefore five of the most graceful persons of his brethren, he went and acquainted Pharaoh that his father and family were arrived in Goshen, and presented the five he had brought with him to the king, who treated them respectfully for Joseph's sake; and demanding what they were bred to, they, according to their instructions answered, that they were shepherds, and humbly begged leave to settle in Goshen. The king turning to Joseph told him, *the whole land is at thy disposal, place them in the best part of it, in* Goshen, *if they like that best; and if there be any among them of extraordinary skill in their way, let them have the care and management of my cattle.*

Joseph's project thus happily succeeding, he introduces his father to the king, whom Jacob reverently salutes. The king graciously condescending to walk with him, enquires his age; who tells him he was an hundred and thirty years old, though his ancestors had lived to a greater age.

Then taking leave of Pharaoh, Joseph placed his father and his brethren in *Rameses*, a city afterwards of *Goshen*, which was the most fertile part of Egypt, where he nourished them, and provided for them according to their families, with that care and tenderness, as if they had been his children.

Good old Israel and his family being thus happily disposed, Joseph returns to his charge. And now the famine increasing, people from all parts of Egypt and Canaan repair to Joseph, who furnished them with provisions as long as their money held out; by which means he had collected all the money in the land, and brought

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it into the King's Exchequer. And when their money failed, they brought their cattle, and he gave them bread in exchange for them.

Thus they went on till the (z) sixth year, and then the famine pressed them so hard, that they were forced to lay their condition before him, telling him, that their money was spent, and he having got their cattle already, they had now nothing left to offer him but their bodies and lands, which they besought him in pity to accept, or else they must perish.

Joseph took them at their word, and in the king's name, and for his use, bought all the land of Egypt, except the land of the priests, who having an allowance from the king, were not compelled to part with their possessions. But the rest of the Egyptians, sold their estates; and thus the land became intirely the king's.

Then Joseph repeating the condition of the bargain, tells them; *Behold, I have this day bought both you and your land for* Pharaoh. *Now here is seed for you, and ye shall (a) sow the land. But upon these terms shall you hold your land: Ye shall every year give the fifth part of your increase to* Pharaoh, *and the other four parts shall be your own for seed, and for food for yourselves and families.*

Thus Joseph settled it a standing law all over Egypt, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part of the yearly increase of the lands, except the lands of the priests. As for common people, Joseph (b) removed them from the places of their constant abode to a greater distance, whereby they in time knew not where to claim.

Thus the Egyptians saved their lives at the loss of their estate and liberties, and of freedom became bond-men; in which condition they yet rejoiced, and gratefully acknowledged Joseph's care, calling him their preserver: and to shew how willingly they submitted to these terms, which the sons of liberty and property would inveigh against as insupportable, to assure their prince, notwithstanding this, of their duty and loyalty, they unanimously cry out to Joseph, *let us find favour in thy sight* [that those conditions may be ratified] *and we will be the king's servants.*

The seven years of famine were succeeded by plentiful and seasonable years, the earth resuming its former fertility, and the whole land abounding in all the usual productions of nature. Twelve of these years of plenty Jacob lived to see: at the end of which nature's lamp grew dim, and near extinguished in him; his decayed spirits warn him of approaching fate,

(z) *Sixth.* This generally is translated the second year; but it must not be understood to be the second year of the seven years of famine, but the second from the time that their money failed, which was indeed the sixth of the seven. *Gen.* xlvii. 18.

(a) *Sow.* This being the last year of the seven barren years, they might sow in hopes of plenty again.

(b) *Removed.* This Joseph probably did, with intent, that by so displacing and unsettling them from their ancient seats and demesnes, and shifting them to and fro, one upon another's land, but leaving none upon their own, he might the better confirm Pharaoh's title to the whole.

Besides, this changing of habitations shewed they had nothing of their own, but received all of the king's bounty.

and each drooping faculty beats an alarm of death.

He therefore sends to his son Joseph, and obliges him by an oath to bury him in the sepulchre of his fathers, which Joseph swears to do. Upon this Jacob bowed himself to God, who besides all his other mercies, had given him a fresh assurance by Joseph's promise and oath, that he should be carried out of Egypt into the promised land.

Joseph leaving his father intirely satisfied in the assurance he had given him, returns home; but is soon recalled by the sad message of his sickness. Whereupon he took his two sons, *Manasseh* and *Ephraim*, and went to visit him.

The feeble patriarch summoneth all his spirits, and exerts them so far as to sit up in his bed to receive his favourite son. And when Joseph came near him, he (*c*) recounted to him the promise which God had made to him of the land of Canaan; *God Almighty*, said he, *appeared to me at* Luz, *in the land of* Canaan, *and blessed me; and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed for an everlasting possession.*

Then taking Joseph's two sons into a peculiar participation of this promise, he adopted them as his own immediate offspring; as for *Reuben* and *Simeon*, says he, they shall be mine, so as to become each of them head of a distinct tribe in Israel, and to enjoy the privilege of primogeniture in right of their father Joseph, to whom the birth-right was transferred from Reuben, because of his incestuous transgression against his father. But as for the issue thou shalt beget after them, they shall be thine, and shall be called by the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And going on, he gave Joseph a short account of the death and burial of Rachel his mother.

All this while that Jacob was talking with Joseph, concerning himself and his sons, he had not taken notice that Joseph's sons were with him, but spoke of them as if they had been absent; till turning to Joseph, and seeing somebody with him, though he could not well discern who they were (for his eyes being dim with age, and the children standing between their father's knees, he could not distinguish them) he asked, who are these? Joseph as piously as directly answers, they are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place.

Then Jacob bids him bring them near him, that he might bless them. And kissing and embracing them, said to Joseph, in a transport of joy, *I was out of hopes of ever seeing thy face again, and now God hath doubled that blessing; for he hath suffered me to live to see thee, and thy children.*

Joseph placing the children according to the order of their birth, had set Manasseh so as to receive the bles-

(*c*) *Recounted.* Perhaps Joseph might not know of this before, he having been separated from his father's family when he was but a boy.

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sing of his father's right-hand, and Ephraim that of his left, guiding his hand at the same time. But Israel stretching out his right-hand, laid it upon the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left upon Manasseh's head; and he blessed Joseph in blessing his children, saying, *God before whom my fathers* Abraham *and* Isaac *did walk, the God which fed me all my life-time, to this day, and the (d) Angel which redeemed me from all evils, bless the lads. And let my (e) name be named on them, and the name of my fathers, and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*

Joseph was uneasy that his father laid his right-hand (which carried with it the preference) on the head of the youngest; and supposing it had been done through inadvertency, he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's to Manasseh's head, saying, *Not so, my father; for this is the first born, therefore put thy right-hand upon his head.*

But Israel, actuated by divine direction, refused, saying, *I know it, my son, I know it. He also shall become a people, and shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his posterity shall become a multitude.*

Then adding to his former blessing he said, *(f) In thee shall* Israel *bless, saying, God make thee as* Ephraim, *and as* Manasseh; still setting Ephraim before Manasseh.

Then finding himself grow weaker, he said to Joseph; *I am now near my end; but though I leave you, God shall be with you, and bring you again into the land of your fathers. And as for thee, my dear* Joseph, *as a distinguishing mark of my love, I have given thee one* (g) *portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the* Amorite, *with my bow and with my sword.*

The conversation hitherto was private, between Jacob and Joseph only: But finding his end was very near, he called for all his sons together, that while he had strength to deliver his mind, he might take his farewel of them; and not only distribute his blessings among them, but foretel

(d) *Angel.* That is, Christ, who is called the Angel or messenger of the covenant, *Mal.* iii. 1.

(e) *Name.* That is, let them be reckoned into our family, equally with the rest of my sons.

(f) *In thee,* &c. That is, when any of the people of Israel shall bless their children, they shall say, *Be thou multiplied as* Ephraim *and* Manasseh *are multiplied.* From hence it was the custom in Israel, that children should be brought to men eminent for piety, that they might bless them, and pray over them: Thus they brought little children to Jesus. But when a blessing was given by imposition of hands, if it was to a son, he that blessed said, *God make thee as* Ephraim *and* Manasseh; if it was to a daughter, *God make thee as* Sarah *and* Rebecca.

(g) *Portion.* Since Jacob was so peaceable a man, that he never, as we read off, engaged in any martial enterprize, it may be inquired, how and when he took this portion of land, which he here gave to Joseph, from the Amorite with his sword and bow, or by force of arms? Some refer it to that act of Simeon and *Levi*, in destroying the inhabitants of Shechem, *Gen.* xxxiv. But that cannot be: For first, Jacob disavowed that act, and blamed them for it, both then and now, *Gen.* xlvi. 5, 6 7. Secondly, those people of Shechem, whom they slew, were not Amorites, but *Hivites*, descended from *Hivi*, the sixth son of Canaan, *Gen.* x. 17. whereas the Amorites came from the fourth son of Canaan, v. 16. Others take these words of Jacob to be spoken in a prophetick sense; foretelling what he in his posterity should do: and through assurance of faith looking upon it as done, undertook to dispose of a double portion (appendant to the birth-right of Joseph, on whom he had conferred the birth-right) to be possessed by his posterity.

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what should befal them and their posterity in after-times. Then directing his speech to them severally, he begins thus to the eldest:

Reuben, thou art my first-born, the prime of my strength, and by right of primogeniture wast born to many privileges and prerogatives, in superiority over thy brethren, and in power from the double inheritance annexed in course to the birth-right: but these thou hast forfeited by defiling thy father's (*h*) bed.

(*i*) Simeon in course is next; but he is joined with Levi, for that wicked combination between them, in the massacre of Hamor and his people. Of these therefore Jacob says, that they were brethren in iniquity: instruments of cruelty were in their habitations: O my soul come not into their secrets; let not my honour be united to their assemblies; for in their anger they slew a (*k*) man, and in their cruel rage they (*l*) digged down a wall; cursed be their anger for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. Thus did Jacob set forth their offence in very aggravating circumstances, to which he pronounces a sentence proportionate, I will (*m*) divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Jacob having treated his three eldest sons with some severity, softens his stile, when he comes to (*n*) Judah; whose name signifying praise, it led him to a high encomium of him.

Judah (said he) thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise for thy strength and courage. Thou shalt put thy enemies to flight; thou shalt pursue them, lay hold of them, and destroy them: thy father's children shall (*o*) bow down before thee. And then

(*h*) *Bed.* When Jacob heard that Reuben had lain with Bilhah, his concubinary wife, *Gen.* xxxv. 22. the text says that he took no farther notice of it then; but now at his death he reproaches him severely with it, and gives it as the reason for which he deprived him of the privileges of primogeniture.

(*i*) *Simeon.* Reuben having forfeited his right of primogeniture, it might be expected, that it should have devolved upon Simeon, who was next: but for his cruelty to Joseph and the idolatry of his tribe in worshipping *Baal-peor*, *Numb.* xxv. the priesthood, which was the nobler dignity of primogeniture, was transferred to Levi, the third son; and the kingdom, the other part of the primogeniture, to Judah.

(*k*) *Man.* This is by figure *Synecdoche*, put for all the inhabitants of Shechem.

(*l*) *Digged*, &c. Meaning the destroying and spoiling the city.

(*m*) *Divide.* This dividing may be applied to Simeon, whose tribe had not a distinct lot assigned them in Canaan, as the other tribes had; but they were thrust within the lot of Judah, *Josh.* xix. 1. until in the time of *Hezekiah* king of Judah, a party of them smote the remainder of *Amalek*, and seating themselves in their possessions, 1 *Chron.* iv. 24. were thereby divided from the rest of their own tribe. As for the tribe of Levi, it was scattered through all the tribe, having no peculiar lot or share of the land as the other tribes had.

(*n*) *Judah.* His mother Leah, *Gen.* xxix. 35. at his birth gave him that name, in gratitude and thankfulness to God. But now his father calls him so for another reason, alluding to the praise his brethren should give him; and that for many reasons; viz. 1. The tribe of Judah was the first that entered the *Red Sea* after Moses. 2. After the death of Joshua, the tribe of Judah was pitched upon to be commander in chief of all the other tribes, in their wars, *Judg.* 1. 3. From this tribe sprang the mighty and powerful king David, his son king Solomon, and several other kings till the Babylonish captivity. 4. This tribe waged war against the Ishmaelites, Idumeans, Moabites, Arabians, and other neighbouring nations. 5. From this tribe descended *Zerobabel*, that commanded the people in their return from *Babylon*. 6. And lastly, from this tribe sprang CHRIST.

(*o*) *Bow down.* By this, though the birth-right was transferred from Reuben to Joseph, 1 Chron. v. 1. with respect to the double portion: yet that part of the prerogative of primogeniture, which concerned authority, or government

then wrapped up in the contemplation of Judah's strength and glory, he breaks forth into these elegant allegories; "Judah is like a (*p*) lion's whelp, from the prey my son thou art gone up. He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall dare to rouze him?" then describing the duration of his government; "the sceptre, said he, shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver be wanting of his issue, till the Messiah come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Then pursuing his allegories, to set forth the prosperity and plenty of Judah's tribe and the abundant fruitfulness of its soil, he added, "binding his fole unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his cloaths in the blood of grapes;" signifying that wine should with them be as plentiful as water.

Jacob keeping still in Leah's line passes by Issachar and takes Zebulon; whose name signifying dwelling, he only says of him, "that he shall dwell at the haven for ships, and his border shall be an haven for ships, and his border shall be unto (*q*) *Zidon*."

Coming next to Issachar, he compares him to a strong ass couching down between two burdens: seated in a pleasant and fertile country; but being naturally slothful and pusillanimous, loved an inglorious ease more than active liberty and bravery.

The good old Patriarch having gone through with Leah's offspring, he takes the handmaids sons next, beginning with *Dan*, son of *Bilhak*, Rachel's handmaid. Dan signifying judging, he said, Dan shall (*r*) judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel; that is, though it was smaller, yet should bear as much authority as another. That it should be like a (*s*) snake on the way, or an adder in the path, which bites the horse's heels, and makes them throw their riders. Here Jacob cried out, (*t*) "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord."

When he spake of *Gad*, alluding

government over the rest, is plainly conferred on Judah and so it is explained here, 1 Chron. v. 2. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, though the birth-right was Joseph's with respect to the inheritance.

(*p*) *Lion's Whelp.* Here are gradually described by the lion's age, the three degrees of the state of this tribe of Judah. The first, its infancy under Joshua, the second, its virile state under *David*. The third, its confirmed state under *Solomon*.

(*q*) *Zidon.* Accordingly this lot came forth, *Josh.* xix. 11.

(*r*) *Judge.* This was fulfilled in *Sampson*, yet was no more than *Issachar* did by *Tola*, Judg. x. 1. But it is supposed, the reason why this was said of Dan, was, to shew that the sons of the handmaids (of which Dan is the first named) though as born of bond-women, they were in that respect inferior to the rest of their brethren, should notwithstanding obtain some share in the government.

(*s*) *Snake.* This seems to intimate that the Danites should prevail more by policy and stratagem, than by open force: which Samson's dealing with the Philistines, *Judges*, *ch.* xiv. and xv. and the Danites taking *Laish*, *ch.* xviii. confirms.

(*t*) *I have.* Modern interpreters are very ridiculously fanciful in the application of this text, distorting it to the most extravagant and contrary meanings. There being no context to make it out, it looks more like a recommendatory ejaculation on the death-bed. But if we suppose something more than ordinary impressed the Patriarch's spirit at this time, might he not have some sense or foresight of the mischief the Danites afterwards brought upon themselves, when having rifled *Micha's* house, and robbed him of his gods, they fell into open idolatry?

also to his name, he said, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at last. By which he is thought to have referred to what was afterwards performed by *Jephthah*, who was of this (*u*) tribe.

Of happy *Asher* he foretels, his bread shall be rich, and kings should reckon it a dainty; which denoted the exuberant richness of soil.

(*w*) *Naphtali*, says he, "shall be like a tree having grafts, shooting out pleasant branches in its generation."

And now he comes to his beloved Joseph, on whom he expatiates very largely, thinking he cannot say enough of him.

"Joseph, says he, is like a fruitful bough of a tree planted near a spring, whose (*x*) branches run over the wall."

And having thus set forth his future greatness in his posterity, he looks back and recollects his past troubles.

"The (*y*) archers, said he, have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode strong, and his hands and arms were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. From thence is the shepherd, the (*z*) stone of Israel to which thou wast advanced by the God of thy Father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the (*a*) blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb."

Then adding, "the blessings of thy Father have prevailed above the blessing of my progenitors, unto the ut-

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(*u*) *Tribe*, Judg. xi.

(*w*) *Naphtali*. The versions generally confound the animals that the scripture speaks of, or transform them into other things, and sometimes trees or plants into animals. Thus here in *Gen.* xlix. 21. they make Jacob, prophesying of the tribe of Naphtali, say, Naphtali, *is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words*. Interpreters differ in nothing so much as this, even those that are for it, confounding their own opinion.——— The learned *Bochart* translates the words of the original thus, Naphtali *shall be like a tree having grafts shooting out pleasant branches*. ———This seems to be most rational and natural, not only from the words, but from the sense; if ye consider, that Jacob compares this tribe to a tree, as he does that of Joseph in the following verses, and as good men are often compared to fine trees, *Ps.* i. 3. and xcii. 12. either because of their fruitfulness, Naphtali having brought but four children to Egypt, *Gen.* xlvi. 24. which in less than 215 years produced more than fifty thousand, *Num.* i. 42. or upon the account of the fruitfulness of the country, which fell to their lot, which Moses and Josephus represent as the richest of all Judea.

(*x*) *Branches*. By this rhetorical amplification Jacob sets forth the strength of Joseph's family, and the large extent of his twofold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh, which at the first numbering of the tribes yielding of men able to go forth to war threescore and twelve thousand and seven hundred men, *Num.* i. And at the second numbering, fourscore and five thousand and two hundred, *Num.* xxvi. far exceeding any other tribe.

(*y*) *Archers*. Amongst these archers, his brethren may undoubtedly claim the first place: for they are expressly said to have hated him, *Gen.* xxxvii. 4. and to have conspired his death, v. 18. and afterwards to have sold him, v. 28. Next to them his lewd mistress, and, by her means, his master Potiphar may be reckoned among these archers that sorely grieved him.

(*z*) *Stone*. So the last English translation has it, making the Shepherd and Stone synonymous. That of 1610, reads it, *of whom was the feeder appointed by the Stone of* Israel: taking the Stone to be *Christ*, and the Shepherd or Feeder appointed by him to be Joseph. But *Tremellius* and *Junius* make Joseph to be both the Shepherd and the Stone, viz. of refuge to Israel. There is an *ellipsis*, or defect in the sentence, which interpreters supply, as they think best. However it be taken, undoubtedly Jacob had a regard to Joseph's constant resisting the assaults of his mistress, and patiently bearing the severity of his master, and likewise to his taking care of and feeding both Israel and the Egyptians, and others, as a Shepherd provides for his flock.

(*a*) *Blessings*. These were terms comprehensive of all outward blessings.

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most bounds of the (*b*) everlasting hills." And then to centre them all in Joseph, he says, they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of him that was separated from his brethren.

Jacob concludes with Benjamin, his youngest son, of whom he said, "Benjamin shall be ravenous as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil," in which words he as aptly as briefly foretells the fierce and cruel nature of that tribe, exemplified, among other instances, in that of the (*c*) Levite's concubine.

The good old Patriarch, having delivered himself thus to his sons, gives them his blessing, not according to his own natural affection or inclination, but according to the divine direction then given him; and putting them in mind of his death, says, "I am going to be gathered to my people, I charge you bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite: which that they might not mistake, he further describes thus; in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. And to engage them the more to perform his will in this, he tells them, there Abraham and Sarah his wife were buried; there Isaac and Rebecca his wife were buried; and there I buried Leah." And to assure them of their right to that burying-place, he tells them further, that the field and the cave therein were purchased not only of Ephron, but of the children of Heth.

Having thus given his last charge to his sons concerning his funeral, he (*d*) laid his feet on the bed and quietly expired.

The loss of so good a father must undoubtedly be very afflicting to so numerous a family, whose chief support depended on the piety of him: yet we find none of Jacob's sons that paid the least demonstrations of filial affection and duty with so much devotion as the pious Joseph. He could not see his aged parent's face, though dead, without kissing, and bathing it with his tears. And having thus given vent to his passion, he commanded his servants, the physicians to (*e*) embalm him; which accordingly they did. And when the usual time of mourning was over, Joseph intreated some of Pharaoh's courtiers (for as he was a mourner, it was not proper for him to appear in his presence) to acquaint him, that his fa-

(*b*) *Everlasting Hills.* Which is a term of duration commonly used in scripture: but *Deut.* xxxiii. 15. seems to explain this text more directly; where Moses, repeating this very blessing of Jacob on Joseph, does not seem so much to regard the comparison of hills in respect of duration, as in point of blessing, which God more largely dispensed in hills and mountains.

(*c*) *Levite's*, &c. See Judg. xix. 20, 21.

(*d*) *Laid.* Whilst Jacob was prophesying and blessing his sons, he sat on the bed, his feet hanging down; but when he had done talking to them and taken his leave of them, he gathered his feet into the bed, and departed.

(*e*) *Embalm.* This being the first mention we have in story of *embalming* the dead, may well countenance a supposition, that the Israelites here learning it of the Egyptians, and practising it afterward on great and solemn occasions amongst themselves, as in 2 *Chron.* xvi. 14. and *John* xix. 40. it might from them come into use amongst christians.

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ther just before his death had obliged him by an oath to bury him in the sepulchre of their family in the land of Canaan; and therefore to beg leave of the king for him to go and bury his father, upon promise to come again. The king readily consents, and Joseph sets forward, attended not only with his own and his father's family, but whth the chief officers of the household and nobility; who to honour Joseph, and grace the funeral, would bear him company, partaking in all the solemnity performed to the memory of his deceased father.

After some travel they came to the threshing floor of *Atad*, where they made a halt: and Joseph made a solemn mourning for his father seven days together. The Canaanites who inhabited the land, seeing the Egyptians mix themselves in these obsequies, were amazed, and thinking they had the greatest concern in this funeral lamentation, could not forbear saying, this is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: from whence the name of that place was called *Abel-Miſraim*, that is, the mourning of the Egyptians.

This solemnity being ended, they went on; and being come to the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought for a burying-place, they buried Jacob in the cave there: and having thus performed Jacob's will they all returned to Egypt.

So long as Jacob lived, Joseph's brethren knew themselves secure; but now their father was dead, their former fear returned, and suggested to them the just revenge Joseph might take of them for the former miseries they had occasioned to him. Wherefore they consulted together how to depreciate their offence; which they soon agreed upon, and made their dead father, whose memory they knew was very dear to pious Joseph, their advocate; and framing a message in Jacob's name, they sent it to their brother in these words. Thy Father commanded us before he died, saying, *thus ſhall ye ſay to* Joseph; *forgive I pray thee now the treſpaſs of thy brethren, and their ſin; for they did evil unto thee: but pardon them, not only for my ſake, but becauſe they are the ſervants of the God of my Father.*

This message was artfully worded; for they, fearing that the supposed request of their dying Father might not be prevailing enough now he was dead, made God their intercessor. But there was no need of such moving arguments to Joseph's compassionate temper: their diffidence of his good-nature is as afflicting now, as their offence was formerly to him. He wept at the delivery of the message; and sending for them, they falling down at his feet in the most abject manner, he tenderly dismisses their fears, and comforts them: *revenge*, says he, *belongs to God, and I forgive you. For, though you deſigned ill againſt me, yet God turned it to good, making me, through your malice, an inſtrument under him to ſave much people alive, and you eſpecially, as is now evident. Therefore fear no hurt from me; for I will protect and cheriſh you and your families.*

Thus

Thus the pious Joseph dismissed his brethren, with the assurance that they should always find in him an affectionate brother, and a constant friend.

Joseph lived four and fifty years after his father's death, having the comfort of seeing himself the happy parent of a numerous offspring in his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to the third generation.

And now finding himself near his end, he sent for his (*a*) brethren, and said thus to them, *my death is at hand; but though I leave you, yet God will surely remember you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he swear he would give to the posterity of* Abraham, Isaac *and* Jacob. *I charge you therefore, when God shall thus visit you, and bring you out of this land, that you carry up my bones with you.*

This eminent Patriarch, having thus bound his brethren by oath, to convey his remains to his native land, departs this life; and they in compliance with his injunction, embalmed his body, and reserved it in a coffin, till the prediction was fulfilled.

(*g*) *Brethren.* By brethren we are not to understand the other eleven sons of Jacob, who, except Benjamin, being all older than himself, might probably be all or most of them dead; but it must here be meant of the heads of their families: for in the scripture dialect all near kinsmen go under the general appellation of brethren, as Abraham called Lot, *Gen.* xiii. 8. and *Ch.* xxiv. 27.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

A NEW KING SUCCEEDING TO THE EGYPTIAN THRONE, SOON AFTER THE DEATH OF JOSEPH, THE ISRAELITES ARE GRIEVOUSLY OPPRESSED. THE KING'S ORDERS TO DESTROY THE MALE CHILDREN IS NOT OBEYED. MOSES IS BORN, AND BROUGHT UP BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. AVENGES THE CAUSE OF HIS BRETHREN. IS APPOINTED SHEPHERD TO JETHRO. GOD APPEARS TO HIM, AND APPOINTS HIM TO A SPECIAL EMBASSY TO THE KING OF EGYPT.

UNHAPPILY for the Israelites, who were strangers in the land of Egypt; they had not long lost Joseph, who was their succour and support, before a new king succeeded to the throne, who regarding them with a jealous eye; and fearing their power and influence, as they were become very wealthy by means of their brother, summoned a council, and laid before them the absolute necessity of checking these strangers in their fortunate career.

The council unanimously agreed, with their jealous prince, in the expedient he proposed, which was to employ them in making bricks, and building store cities for Pharaoh.

To gratify their avarice as well as cruelty, they proposed not to reap the profits of their service, but by continual hard labour to impoverish their spirits, and enfeeble their bodies: therefore they set task-masters to oversee and keep them to hard labour, by which, and other servile work, they made their lives very uncomfortable.

But God supported them under their severities; for the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more they grew and multiplied, which increased their jealousy to a greater degree of cruelty, insomuch that the king, to suppress their growth, spoke to two of the *Hebrew* (*w*) midwives, *Shiphrah* and *Puah*, and gave them a strict charge, that when they should be called to do their office to the *Hebrew* women, if the child were a son, they should kill kim; but if a daughter, that she should live.

(*w*) *Midwives.* The critics very needlessly, and with more subtilty than solidity, controvert who these midwives were? and whether they were Hebrews or Egyptians? Without doubt they were Hebrews; and by the king of Egypt's application to them, the most celebrated of their profession.

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But these pious women, fearing the displeasure of the Almighty King, rather than that of an earthly potentate, notwithstanding the strict injunction, preserved the male children; for which Pharaoh sends for them, and in great displeasure reprimands their neglect of his edict. In excuse for which they tell him, that the *Hebrew* women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are like (*x*) wild beasts, delivered before the midwives could come to them.

The piety of the midwives in preserving the male children was so acceptable to God, that he is said there upon to deal well with the midwives; and because they feared God, he made them (*y*) houses. And by this means the people multiplied, and grew mighty.

The king, whether satisfied or not, with this answer of the midwives, not finding it safe to trust them any longer, resolved upon a more effectual method to extirpate the Hebrews; and therefore he gave (*z*) charge to all his people, that every son, that should be born to the Hebrews, should be thrown into the river.

This cruel edict for drowning all the male children must needs be very afflicting to the Hebrew parents, and put them upon many a thoughtful contrivance to preserve their infants, of which an instance soon followed; for one *Amram* of the house of *Levi*, having married a daughter of the same family, named *Jochebed*, had by her a daughter, whose name was *Miriam*, and four years after a son, whom they called *Aaron*. About three years after Aaron's birth Jochebed, was delivered of another son, who being a child of most elegant beauty, something supernatural and divine appearing in his form, his mother was the more solicitous for his preservation.

Having kept him concealed in her house three months; but not being able any longer to hide him, and fearing he might fall into the hands of those that were appointed to drown the male children, she contrived a way to save him, by making a little boat of bulrushes, which she daubed with pitch and slime, to keep the water out; and putting the child into it, she laid it among the flags, by the river side, and set his sister Miriam at a distance to observe what became of him.

But the Providence of God soon interposed in behalf of the helpless infant: for (*a*) *Thurmuthis*, Pharaoh's only

(*x*) *Wild Beasts.* The Hebrew word *Chajoth*, which is the original, signifies not only animals in general, but Beasts, and even Wild Beasts, as has been observed by learned men, and may be seen in several places of Scripture.

(*y*) *Houses.* That is, he made them to prosper, gave them children, and blessed their families. The word house being usually in scripture taken for the offspring or family of any one; as the house of Aaron, Judah, David, &c. are put for the family of Aaron, Judah, David, &c.

(*z*) *Charge.* This inhuman edict is supposed by commentators to be so abhorred by the Egyptians, that they scarce ever put it in execution: and that it was recalled immediately after the death of *Amenopthis*, then king of Egypt, who enacted it; which time *Eusebius* and others place in the fourth year of Moses.

(*a*) *Thurmuthis.* So *Josephus* calls her; and from him *Philo*, who adds, that she was the king's only daughter and heir; and that being some time married, but having no child, she pretended to be big with child and to be delivered

only daughter, coming to the river to bathe herself, her maids looking for a retirement for that purpose, discovered the boat, with the child in it, which Thurmuthis commanding them to bring to her; she no sooner uncovered the child, but it made its mournful complaint to her in a flood of tears.

This unexpected accident, and the extraordinary beauty of the child, moved the Egyptian princess with compassion, which she expressed in an accent of pity, saying to this effect, "this is some Hebrew child, which the parents have hid, to preserve him from the king's cruel edict."

By this time Miriam, the child's sister, had crowded herself in amongst the attendants of the princess; and observing with what tenderness she looked upon the child, very officiously offered her service to procure an Hebrew nurse for him; which the princess accepted; and the girl hastened away to her mother, and brought her to the place, where she received the child from the princess, who engaged to pay her for her care.

No doubt but this was a welcome bargain to the mother, who taking the child home with her, durst now nurse it openly, having a royal protection for his security.

When he was grown big enough, his mother brought him to the court to shew him to the princess, and satisfy her how he had improved under her care. The princess grew so fond of him, that she adopted him for her (*b*) son; and in remembrance that she had drawn him out of the water, she called his name (*c*) *Moses*; and to accomplish him the more, she keeps him at court, where he is instructed in all the learning and discipline used among the Egyptians, both civil and military, and in all things requisite and becoming the character and quality of a prince of the blood.

Moses being forty years old, left the court, and went to see his brethren; and when he reflected on the oppression they laboured under, it affected him with compassion and indignation to see the servants of the most High God subjected to a servitude exceeding that of brutes. This was soon increased by an opportunity that just then offered; which was an Egyptian striking an Hebrew. This inflamed Moses's zeal, who looking about to see whether any man was within sight, chastises the Egyptian, making him

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livered of Moses, whom she owned as her natural son: Agreeable to which is what the Apostle in *Heb.* xi. 24. says, that when Moses was grown up he scorned to be thought the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

From whence it is plain he was esteemed as such. And if any one should ask, why he did not in right of his mother succeed in the kingdom? it may reasonably be answered, that the fraud of his adopted mother, and his own adoption, being detected, he could pretend no right to the crown of Egypt.

(*b*) *Son.* The Jews observe, that whoever brings up a pupil in his house, is in scripture said to have begotten him. And thus it is said, *Exod.* ii. 10. That Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, though she had only taken care of his education.

(*c*) *Moses.* At his circumcision, says *Clement Alexandrinus*, his parents called him *Joachim*, (that is, the resurrection of the Lord) from a presaging hope, that the Lord, through him, would raise up his people Israel, deliver them from the Egyptian bondage they were then in, and bring them again to the promised land.

expiate his barbarity to the injured Hebrew with his * blood; and afterwards buried him in the sand; supposing by his taking upon him thus to administer justice, that his brethren would have (*e*) understood, that God by his hand would have delivered them; but they understood him not. However, the next day he went out, and shewed himself among them again; and finding two men of the Hebrews quarrelling, he endeavoured to reconcile them, putting them in mind that they were brethren: and with some smartness reprehending his aggressor, he demanded for what reason he thus attacked the other? the fellow thrusting him away with disdain, replies; *who made you a prince and judge over us? do you intend to kill me, as you did the* Egyptian *yesterday?* Moses was startled at this, and to prevent the fatal consequence that would attend, in reaching the ears of the king, he left Egypt, a circumstance that strongly proves his being immediately under the divine care; for Pharaoh soon heard of it, but Moses was fled from his dominions into the land of Midian.

Here was the happy place, and then the blessed time when majesty guarded only with rural innocence, submitted to the humble office of a shepherd, and a crook instead of a sceptre graced the peaceful monarch's hand. Here Jethro first in quality both of prince and priest enjoyed the blessings of a quiet reign, whose daughters laid aside the distinction of their birth to feed their father's flocks, and took more delight in the innocent and useful employment of tending their harmless sheep, than in the luxurious gaiety of a court.

In the plains of Midian there was a well common to all the natives of the place to water their cattle. Hitherto Moses directed his steps, as well to rest himself, as allay his thirst; where whilst he was refreshing himself, the seven daughters of the prince of Midian (that is, Jethro, who was both priest and prince) came to draw water to fill the troughs to give their sheep; but some churlish shepherds, having a mind to serve their own turns first, came rudely and put the royal shepherdesses by. Moses seeing this, steps in to their relief; and chastising the shepherds, made them fly.

The frighted damsels returned to the well, and Moses very officiously assists them in drawing water for their flocks: After which, they took their leave, and hasted home to give their father an account of the generosity of the stranger, who had pro-

* Some object, that it was very unreasonable for Moses to kill the Egyptian for only striking one of the Hebrews. In answer to this the Hebrews say, that the Hebrew, whom the Egyptian struck, was husband to one Salomith, a very beautiful woman, whom the Egyptian had debauched. And that therefore Moses slew the Egyptian not for striking the Hebrew, but for the adultery, which he discovered from them, whilst they were quarrelling; some say, perhaps the Egyptian had almost killed the Hebrew, and that Moses could no other way than by force keep him off; Or that the Egyptian attacked Moses. and so he was forced to kill him in his own defence.

(*e*) *Understood.* See *Acts* vii. 25. where this is positively expressed by St. Stephen.

tected them against the insults of the rusticks. (f) *Jethro*, hearing this story, and not seeing the person that had thus gallantly defended them, reprehends the ingratitude and incivility, asking what was become of the generous stranger? They told him they left him at the well: Whereupon he bid them go, and invite him home, where Moses was so pleased with their kind entertainment, that he expressed a willingness to take up his residence with them, and undertake the charge of their sheep. Jethro readily closed with the proposal, and to engage him the more to his interest, bestowed *Zipporah*, one of his daughters, upon him for a wife; by whom he had two sons, the eldest of which he named *Gerſhom*, which signifies a stranger here: For he said, (g) I have been a stranger in a strange land; and the younger he called *Eliezer*, importing, God my help: For the (h) God of my father, said he, was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Whilst Moses continued in Jethro's family, the king of Egypt died; but his successor proved no more favourable to the poor oppressed *Hebrews*; who changed their oppressor, but not their condition; the miseries of which rather increased than abated. In vain they appeal to the merciless tyrant, and his more cruel task-masters, who lord it over them with unbounded severity.

But God, who saw the affliction of his people, and whose ears were open to receive their complaints, looked with an eye of compassion upon them; and the appointed time of their deliverance, which he in his secret Providence had determined, being near, he began to think of preparing Moses for it, whom he intended to make use of as an instrument in the great work.

Whilst Moses kept his father-in-law's sheep, he one day (i) led them as far into the desart as mount (k) *Horeb*, where the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush. Moses was startled at the sight, but that which added to his admiration and roused his curiosity, was the continuance of the bush unconsumed, notwithstanding it was wholly encompassed with flames.

This extraordinary accident made Moses consider it more attentively, and therefore said to himself, I will turn aside, and see if I can discover the reason why the bush is in a flame of fire, and yet is not consumed. But the Lord, to prevent his irreve-

(f) *Jethro.* He is called in *Exodus* ii. 18. *Reuel.* He is also called Reuel, *Num.* x. 29. who was father to *Hobab*, called also and more commonly, Jethro. *Exod.* iii. 1.

(g) *I have. Exod.* ii. 21.

(h) *God. Exod.* xviii. 4.

(i) *Led.* Here we may observe the manner of those times and countries, that whereas the shepherds here drive their flocks before them; the shepherds there went before their flocks, and the flocks followed them, which custom is alluded to in *Pſalm.* lx. x. 1. and *John* x. 4.

(k) *Horeb.* Which signifies *forſaken*, and is here, *Exod.* iii. 1. called the mountain of God, by way of anticipation, both from the following appearance of God upon it, at this time, and his descending upon it afterwards, to give the law to his people, *Ch.* xix. 20. where though it is called Sinai, it is the same place with this, for St. Stephen reciting this present passage in *Acts* vii. 30. calls it mount Sinai.

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rent approaches, and strike the greater awe, and sense of the divine presence into him, called to him out of the bush, and forbade him drawing nearer; and to make him still more sensible of the sacredness of the place, God commanded him not to prophane it, but to put of his sandals, for the ground whereon he stood was (*l*) holy.

Moses being prepared for an awful attention, the Almighty thus discovers himself to him; *I am the God of thy father, the God of* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob. These words struck the frighted Moses with such reverence of the divine majesty, and fear of the effects of his presumption, that he fell on the ground and covered his face, not daring to look upon the terrible glory.

But the Lord addressed him thus: *I have seen the affliction of my people; I have heard their complaint, and am* (*m*) *come down to deliver them out of the hand of their oppressors, and to conduct them to the promised land, a land that floweth with* (*n*) *milk and honey: to the place of the* Canaanites *and* Hittites, *the* Amorites, *and the* Perizzites, *the* Hivites, *and the* Jebuzites. *And thee have I pitched upon to be the instrument in this great work; therefore be of good* (*o*) *courage; for I will send thee to* Pharoah *to demand liberty of him for my people, the children of* Israel.

Moses considering the hatred of the king of Egypt towards him, as well as his own insufficiency for and unworthiness of being the messenger of the most high God, excused himself from the arduous task in these words. *Who am I, that I should go unto* Pharoah, *and that I should bring forth the children of* Israel *out of* Egypt? When the Lord further encouraged him to proceed on the task; he still evaded the same; inquiring in what manner he should address the Israelites, and by whom he should tell them he was deputed. The Lord awfully replied (*p*) I AM THAT I AM. And thou shalt further say to them, I AM THAT I AM; *that is, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Isaac, *the God of* Jacob, *has sent me to you; that is the name I have had from all eternity, and by that name will I be known for ever.*

Go, gather the (*q*) *elders of* Israel, *and*

(*l*) *Holy.* Meaning, that wherever God, who is holiness itself appears, the place is holy, while he is there.

(*m*) *Come.* This is speaking according to human passion, or after the manner of men: God vouchsafes to express himself in the dialect and according to the capacity of man, that he may understand him.

(*n*) *Milk.* This is an hyperbolical expression of fruitfulness and plenty of good things.

(*o*) *Courage.* This is most properly rendered by the *Septuagint*, the word which we render *come now*, being an adverb of exhorting.

(*p*) I AM. This denotes the eternity of God, whose essence knows no beginning nor end. And it is common with the Hebrews to express the future in the present tense: And for this reason some say, I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE: and contend that it ought to be rendered not only from the letter of the Hebrew text, but from the genuine sense of she word; from which others likewise infer, that it ought to be so rendered, I WILL BE *for ever*; and I WILL BE *with you, and redeem you from the* Egyptians: and others, I WILL be *with you in your present tribulations and future calamities.* This name is likewise expressed in *Revelations*, by which it signifies JEHOVAH, which is the proper name of God.

(*q*) *Elders.* These could not be doctors, because at that time they had not a law; but the heads or chiefs of tribes,

and ſay to them, the Lord God of your fathers hath appeared to me, and ſaid, I have ſeen all the calamities that have befallen you in Egypt, *and am reſolved to deliver you, and lead you into the land of* Canaan.

The Israelites *ſhall believe you, and you ſhall go to the king of* Egypt, *and ſay to him, the God of the* Hebrews *hath commanded us to go three days journey into the deſart, there to offer ſacrifice to the Lord our God.*

This requeſt, though ſo very reaſonable, I know he will not grant, but refuſe to let you go, unleſs compelled by a powerful hand. But I will exert myſelf in many miraculous operations upon him and his ſubjects; and at laſt he ſhall permit you to depart; but you ſhall not go away empty, for ye ſhall be loaded with the ſpoils of the Egyptians.

This solemn assurance delivered by the mouth of God, one would be apt to think, might have been sufficient to have encouraged Moses willingly to undertake the embassy; but either from the difficulty or boldness of the enterprize, or from diffidence of his own abilities, he declined it, and questioned whether the Israelites would receive his credentials.

This objection God immediately removed by a miracle; for commanding him to throw his sheep-hook on the ground, it was instantly turned into a serpent. Moses affrightened at this sudden change of his sheep-hook fled from it. But God to encourage him, bid him take it up by the tail: which he had no sooner done, but it resumed its former shape; and at the same time, to convince him that he should not want credit with the Israelites, God gave him commission to perform the same miracle before them.

And to remove all further scruple, he condescended to give him another sign, bidding him put his hand into his bosom; which he had no sooner done, but it was struck with a (*r*) white leprosy. And when by God's command he had put it into his bosom again, and plucked it out, his flesh resumed it's former colour and substance.

Moreover, to arm him sufficiently beyond all question, he was pleased to add a third miracle; *If they will not believe theſe two former, thou ſhalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land, and the water ſhall become blood.*

Notwithstanding these solemn and repeated assurances of divine aid, favour and protection, Moses still waved the important office urging as a farther plea, that he wanted eloquence, the great qualification of an ambassador; and since God had condescended to talk to him, he was more slow of speech than before.

This objection the Lord was pleased to remove, by putting him

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tribes and families. By which it is plain there was a private policy and œconomy continued among the Israelites, though in this servile condition.

(*r*) *White Leproſy.* The evidence of this miracle was ſo much the more convincing, becauſe the *white leproſy*, which was held incurable, was both inflicted and healed in an inſtant, without any outward means or phyſical application.

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in mind of his omnipotence. *Who made the mouth of man?* said he, *And who made the dumb and deaf, and the blind, and him that sees? Was it not I? Now therefore go, and I will furnish thee with words, and make thee eloquent.*

Hitherto Moses had some glimpse of pretence for his unwillingness to go; but now all his objections are answered, and his scruples removed, he very bluntly begs to be excused from this enterprize, saying, *O my Lord, instead of me send, I pray thee, by (s) him whom thou shalt send.*

So long as Moses had any thing to plead in (*t*) excuse for his not going, God heard him patiently, and graciously condescended to remove his doubts; but when his modesty in declining the office and honour God proposed to him was turned into an obstinate refusal, the Lord was angry with him; but in his anger remembering mercy, he resumes Moses's last objection (which he had already answered in general) and shews him more particularly how to supply this defect; *Is not* Aaron, *the Levite, thy brother?* said he; *He is eloquent, and I will appoint him to meet thee. Tell him what I have said, and be assured that I will assist you both, and direct you what to say: He shall be the Orator, and thou shalt be to him (u) instead of (w) God. And to strengthen thy commission, and give thee credit among my people, take this rod in thy hand, for I will enable thee to do many miracles with it.*

Moses, having nothing more to urge against this enterprize, at last yields, and took (*x*) the rod of God in his hand. Then taking his wife and sons he left mount *Horeb*, and went to *Jethro*, his father-in-law, with whom, it seems he left them till he had conducted the children of *Israel* out of Egypt, when Jethro brought them to him again in the wilderness.

Moses being thus convinced that God had designed him the agent in transacting this grand affair, whilst he was preparing himself for his journey, to make him more cheerfully proceed in it, and to dispel his fears of being called to account for his former actions in Egypt, God bids him return thither, assuring him that those who had a design against his life were dead.

Then repeating his former order,

(*s*) *Him.* Exod. iv. 13.—Most of the fathers understand this text as referring to the Messiah, as the only person properly qualified to execute so important a commission; and by this is meant those words of God, when he says, "I will send my angel before thee: Beware of him, provoke him not; for my nature is in him.

(*t*) *Excuse.* It is the opinion of several commentators on this place, and it is very probable, Moses had another reason besides his insufficiency, which made him unwilling to go on this errand into Egypt; and which he was not willing to discover. Just before God appeared to Moses in the bush, and had this dissourse, with him as we read in *Exodus.* "That the King of Egypt died;" that king in whose reign Moses had slain the Egyptian, and who sought to apprehend him and put him to death for it.

(*u*) *Instead.* That is, He shall consult thee instead of me, that from thee he may know my will, and thou shalt impart to him what thou receivest of me. Consonant to this is that of our Saviour *Christ* to his Apostles, *He that heareth you, heareth me, &c.*

(*w*) *God.* By these words, *Thou shalt be to him* instead of, *or as God.* Commentators shew the power of God now invested Moses with, in delivering him this commission, making him not only chief over Aaron, but the rest of the Israelites. For this name of God is nowhere given to men but to signify the power of life and death over them.

(*x*) *Rod of God.* So it is now called, since God had so signally honoured it, and, as it were, consecrated it to an holy use, *Exod.* iv. 26.

he says, *When thou comeſt into Egypt, be ſure to perform all the miracles I have enabled thee to do; and to illuſtrate my power I will ſo harden* Pharaoh's *heart, that he ſhall refuſe to let the children of Iſrael go, till I have ſlain his ſon, even his firſt-born.*

By the way God takes occasion to put Moses in mind of the danger of disobedience, to preserve him from lapsing into it hereafter.

It seems Moses, either through neglect, or indulgence to his wife, who was not an Israelite, had not yet circumcised his son *Eliezer*, by which he provoked the Lord so highly, that in the way he threatened to (*z*) kill him for his neglect.

His wife *Zipporah*, understanding the cause of the divine displeasure, took a sharp flint, and immediately circumcised the child; and throwing the foreskin at her husband's feet, she said, *Thou art a huſband (a) of blood to me.*

This being over, the Lord pardoned Moses, and dismissed him to pursue his journey, which he did, and soon arrived at his father-in-law, Jethro's house, whom, as he acquainted not with the particular reason of his leaving Egypt, so neither does he now say any thing to him of the vision he had seen, nor the message he had received from God to deliver to the king of Egypt: but as he had entered himself by contract into Jethro's service, and become so nearly related as to be his son-in-law, he thought it but reasonable to ask his consent to return to Egypt to visit his brethren, and see whether they were living. Jethro readily gave consent in the usual form, *Go in peace.*

Moses being now in the way to Egypt, the Lord (*b*) commanded Aaron his brother to go into the wilderness to meet Moses. Aaron obeyed the holy call, and went as far as mount Horeb, where he met his brother and embraced him; to whom Moses told all that God had commanded him, and the wonders he was to perform.

The two brothers thus joined in commission, though Moses was sovereign, repair to Egypt; and summoning the elders of the people together, Aaron delivers the message which the Lord had sent by Moses, and Moses straightway confirmed it, by doing the miracles which God had commanded, in the sight of the people, who thereupon believed, and received them joyfully.

And now, all being convinced that the Lord had taken compassion on the wretched condition of the children of Israel, that he had visited them in their affliction, and taken a course for their deliverance, they fell down and worshipped him.

(*z*) *Kill him.* It seems most probable from the context that Moses's punishment must be sickness or some corporal visitation upon him; otherwise, if he had been in health, he, and not *Zipporah* his wife, would have circumcised the child.

(*a*) *Blood.* Undoubtedly, the word *blood* here refers to the *circumciſion*, which was the cause of its effusion. Nor do they seem to conjecture amiss, who thus interpret this text: *With the blood of my child I preſerve and ſave thee: for, the neglect of the child's being circumciſed being thy fault, I have ſaved thy life by the blood of the circumciſion, which otherwiſe God might have taken away.*

(*b*) *Command.* Hence it is plain that Aaron, as a prophet received a revelation from God; which is likewise confirmed, 1 *Sam*, ii. 27. *Did not I plainly appear to the houſe of thy father, when they were in Egypt?* For *Eli* was deseended from Aaron.

CHAP. XI.

MOSES AND AARON ARRIVE AT THE COURT OF PHARAOH, DELIVER THEIR MESSAGE TO THE KING, AND ARE REPRIMANDED BY HIM. PHARAOH INCREASES THE BURTHEN OF THE ISRAELITES. GOD RENEWS HIS PROMISE TO HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE. PHARAOH'S HEART IS HARDENED, INSOMUCH THAT HE WOULD NOT RELEASE THE ISRAELITES FROM BONDAGE, NOT-WITHSTANDING THE MIRACLES WROUGHT BY MOSES AND AARON.

THE servants of God thus commissioned, arrive at the court of Pharaoh; and in positive terms demanded the release of the Israelites. The haughty tyrant not only denied compliance with their demand, but most impiously arraigned the divine prerogative, and called in question the existence of the only wise and true God in these presumptuous words, *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his voice to let* Israel *go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let* Israel *go.*

Moses and Aaron to inform him whom they meant by the Lord, replied, *The God of the* Hebrews *whom we adore, hath commanded us to offer ſacrifice to him; therefore we beg leave to go three days journey into the deſart, that we may pay due adoration to our God, leſt he puniſh us for our diſobedience, and you much more for hindering us.*

The King incensed at this unusual liberty they took, and looking upon them as incendiaries, sharply reprimanded them, saying, *Why do ye hinder the people from work? Becauſe they are numerous, you would incite them to rebel: be gone all to your labour, or I'll make you ſenſible of Royal diſpleaſure.*

The King having thus rudely dismissed Moses and Aaron, gave charge to the task-masters that they should no more give the people straw to make brick, as they had done before; but make them go gather straw for themselves where they could find it; but yet to lay upon them the same tale of bricks without abatement: For, said he, they are idle, and this is but a pretence to excuse them from their work. The task-masters acquainted their under officers with this severe injunction, who immediately told it to the people, and they accordingly were forced to wander about the country to seek for stubble instead of straw; the task-masters at the same time exacting from them their usual number of bricks; which, when they were not able to perform, the under-officers, who were Israelites, and whom the task-masters had set over them, were called to account and beaten.

They, not well knowing from whence this severity proceeded, whether from the edict of the King or the rigour of the task-masters, complained to the King himself; and laying their grievance before him, in a most humble manner expostulated the matter with him thus: *Why ſhould the King deal ſo ſeverely with his ſervants? The taſk-maſters allow us no ſtraw, and yet demand brick of us, which is impoſſible to be done: and though they*

they are in fault, yet are we punished.

This just and most reasonable desire, instead of redress, met with an addition to the cause of their complaint; the King told them they should have no straw, and yet deliver the full tale of bricks.

This answer gave them much uneasiness, and drove them almost to despair; so that, meeting with Moses and Aaron in the way, as they came from Pharaoh, and looking upon them as the cause of having these heavier burdens laid upon them, the unadvisedly giving way to their present passion, discharged their grief and anger upon them, saying, *The Lord (c) revenge us on you; for ye have made us hateful and abominable in the sight of the King and his subjects and have given them (d) occasion to oppress us the more.*

This reflection grieved the soul of Moses, who expected a more grateful return for his care and concern for them; wherefore retiring from them, he addressed himself to God in this humble expostulation; *Why, O Lord, hast thou thus afflicted this people? For since I spoke to* Pharaoh *in thy name, he hath treated them with more severity than before; and they are more unlikely to be delivered than ever.*

Moses's concern for the oppression of the Israelites, made him forget the promise God had given him, and the perverseness of Pharaoh, which he had foretold: However, God, to encourage him, gave him this gracious answer: *I am the Lord, the Almighty God that appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Was I not known to them by my name Jehovah? Be assured that I, the Lord, who made a covenant with their fathers to give to their posterity the land of Canaan, have heard their complaints, and remembered my promise.*

Therefore say thus to the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, who exist only of myself, and give existence to all beings.

Tell them, I will deliver them from the Egyptian slavery, with the power of the Almighty arm, and inflict heavy judgments on those that oppress them.

Nor will I only deliver you all from this bondage, but I will take you under my immediate protection: ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, your God, who will release you from the oppressions of Egypt. And I will bring you into the land, concerning which I (f) lifted up my hand in confirmation that I would give it to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in their posterity: And I will give it you for an inheritance.

I am Jehovah, the Lord, that pro-

(c) *Revenge.* Thus the Chaldee paraphrase, and not disagreeable to the Hebrews, who often by Metonymy take *judgment* for the bond or end of *judgment.* Thus to *judge* is often used for to *revenge.*

(d) *Occasion.* The text is in *Exod.* v. 21. *Ye have put a sword into their hand to slay us.*; which cannot literally be taken here; for the Egyptians had both the civil and military sword always in their power, to use as they pleased. But this is a Scripture phrase, and is often used to express any pungent calamity or affliction.

(f) *Lifted.* This was the original form of invoking the Almighty, when an oath was administered, in all the Eastern countries, and also used by the Jews and primitive Christians.

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miseth this, and that can, and will do it.

Encouraged by this gracious declaration of the Almighty, Moses accordingly repaired to the children of Israel, and delivered his message, as God had commanded. But they, considering the sad increase of their servitude ever since he undertook to be their deliverer, were so prejudiced against him, that they would not believe him.

Upon this he left them, till either the extremity of their sufferings, or the hand of God eminently appearing in plaguing their oppressor, should awaken them to a greater desire of deliverance.

But God, pursuing the ends of his providence, commanded Moses to go to the King of Egypt, and demand the liberty of his people.

Moses, having been so roughly dismissed from Pharaoh's presence, and so unkindly rejected by the Israelites, declined the errand, by drawing an argument from each; *Since the children of Israel,* says he, *thine own people, would not hear me, though what I offered was so much to their advantage; how can I expect that so wicked a prince as Pharaoh is, should give credit to such a (g) stammerer as I am, in a matter so much to his loss?*

But the Lord, as before, was still patient in hearing, and removed Moses's objections; and therefore said to him, *Consider, I have made thee as a (h) God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy interpreter, or orator. Thou shalt tell them all that I have commanded thee, and ye shall demand of Pharaoh the deliverance of my people. And that thou mayest not be discouraged by a repulse, as before, take notice that Pharaoh shall give no credit to what thou sayest, that I may thereby shew my power and wonders on him and his people, and deliliver the children of Israel by the strength of my hand. For since Pharaoh hath begun to harden his heart in contemptuously treating me, and abusing my people, I will now permit him to go on in his obstinate humour that I may exert my power in miraculous operations in the land of Egyyt. Therefore when ye come into Pharaoh's presence, and he shall demand a miracle of you, to convince him of the truth of your message, thou shalt direct Aaron to cast his rod on the ground before Pharaoh, and it shall be turned into a serpent.*

Pursuant to the divine command, they appeared before Pharaoh, and delivered their message; which he rejecting, Aaron cast down his rod before the King, in the sight of his servants, and it became a serpent.

(g) *Stammerer.* The word in the text, *Exod.* vi. 12, is rendered, *Who am of uncircumcised lips*, that is slow of speech; for Moses laboured under a defect in his tongue, as he urged when God first pitched upon him to undertake the deliverance of his people. But the word *uncircumcised* is phraseologically used upon several occasions by the Hebrews, as when they called any one *uncircumcised in heart, mind*, or *tongue*, they mean one whose secret intentions are evil, and whose tongue speaks profane words, for, as Circumcision was the first and greatest Sacrament among them, so Uncircumcision was esteemed by them the greatest scandal and disgrace.

(h) *God.* That is, by exercising the judgments of God upon him, thou shalt be as terrible to him as God.

To confront this miracle, the King presently sent for his (*i*) magicians, who, by their inchantments performed the same that Aaron did by God's immediate power. For, throwing down their rods, they became in appearance serpents; but with this difference, that Aaron's devoured theirs, and resumed its wonted form.

This miracle made no impression on the obstinate tyrant; therefore God resolved to make use of more sensible scourges, and afflict the Egyptians with such a succession of plagues as should compel them to dismiss the inslaved Israelites; and having observed to Moses, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he bade him take the rod which was then turned into a serpent, and present himself in Pharaoh's view, at his usual time of coming to the banks of the river Nile; giving him this fresh instruction: *Tell him, The Almighty God of the Hebrews hath sent thee to him; and though he hath been so obstinate hitherto as to detain the Israelites, their God will afflict him for his perverseness; that he will make him sensible by his judgments, which he will inflict upon him and his people.*

And to encourage Moses in the execution of his commission, he promised his assistance in the performance of the first miracle, which was turning the water of the river into blood.

Moses, ever attentive to the divine command, at the time appointed, waited the king's coming to the (*k*) river, and accosted him with the message. The infidel Prince, deaf to the call of God, by two heavenly missionaries, persisted in his resolution (so little did the first miracle operate on him) and though Moses and Aaron admonished him of the omnipotence of their God, he would not believe them.

Aaron therefore receiving the rod from Moses, lifted it up, as God had commanded; and striking the water, it turned into (*l*) blood; which, immediately stagnating, grew so offensive, that the fish were suffocated, and the inhabitants forced to dig for water in new places to allay their thirst.

Notwithstanding this plague continued upon them for seven days, yet Pharaoh was still obstinate; and his hatred to the Israelites inflamed the more, because Moses being known to have had his education among the Egyptians, the King concluded, that all this was performed by magic skill. Wherefore, calling for his magicians, he put them upon the same trial; who, taking some of the water

(*i*) *Magicians.* Two of which, who probably were the most eminent of the company, are by the apostle named *James* and *Jambres*, 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. not from any place of the Old Testament, but from other records of the Jews as divers other things mentioned in the New Testament.

(*k*) *River.* This is the river *Nilus*, and in the Scripture History was considered as the most famous river in the universe. In many respects it was so, whether we consider the greatness of it (for it runs about nine hundred German miles) or the things it produces, or the miraculous ebbing or flowing of it. It is absolutely called in the Scripture *Nachal Misraim*, the river unnaturally derived.

(*l*) *Blood.* *Theodoret* upon *Exodus* says thus of this change of the waters of Nile: Being changed into blood they accused the Egyptians of the murder of the infants. And the book of *Wisdom.* xi. 6. makes the same observation: *Instead of a fountain of running water, the enemies were troubled with corrupt blood, which was to rebuke the commandment of the killing of the children.*

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which the Egyptians had digged, by their enchantments, they made him believe that they turned it to blood.

Although this was but a delusion, yet it convinced Pharaoh that what Moses and Aaron had done, was not the effect of any supernatural virtue, but a mere trick of art, and thereupon returned resolute to stop the Israelites.

But it pleased God to display repeated miracles before this cruel and obstinate monarch; for as soon as the seven days were expired, Moses, at the command of God, accosted him again, and renewed his instances for the delivery of the Israelites, threatening, upon his refusal, to bring upon the land such prodigious numbers of frogs as should visit him and his subjects in their most private recesses.

Pharaoh, regardless of his threats, defied him; upon which Moses gave Aaron an order to take the rod, and stretch forth his hand with it over the river, which in an instant so affected all the waters of Egypt, that not waiting for the slow productions of nature, the animated streams unburthened themselves upon the land in shoals of frogs, which immediately invaded all parts, infesting even the royal palace with their disagreeable croaking.

Now again Pharaoh had recourse to his magicians, who, by their mimic power so deluded him, that they made him believe they wrought the same miracle, which hardened him for a while; but the loathsome plague pursuing him and his people wherever they went, he was obliged to apply to Moses and Aaron for relief, offering to capitulate with their God upon terms of permission for them to go and sacrifice to him.

Moses demanded the time when this should be put to an issue, and they both agreed upon the next day. Accordingly Moses addressed himself to God, and the frogs soon died, which the people gathered in heaps, so that the land stank of them before they could be disposed of.

The impious Pharaoh vainly imagined that the artillery of vengeance was then exhausted, unfaithfully broke his word, and refused to let the Israelites go to serve their God.

This violation so provoked the Almighty, that he resolved to treat the haughty tyrant in a more surprising manner than he had hitherto done; for before, he first denounced his jndgments by giving him warning, that he might escape them. But now he would give him no further notice, and therefore commanded Moses to direct Aaron to stretch forth his rod, and strike the dust with it, that it might become (*m*) Lice.

Aaron had no sooner obeyed, than straitway the animated dust turned into a swarm of vermin, which the magicians, who had faintly imitated the former plagues, now attempted in vain. They owned their art out-

(*m*) *Lice.* What kind of creature this was, is not certainly known. It seems to me most probable, that it was some new kind of creature, called analogically by an unknown name, as *Pererius* conjectures; and it is approved by *Rivet.*

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done, and acknowledged this to be the inimitable work of a divine hand.

And yet again, notwithstanding the obstinacy of Pharaoh, who would not in the least hearken to Moses and Aaron, God condescended to give him another summons.

Riſe up, says God to Moses, *early in the morning, and meet Pharaoh as he comes to the river. Tell him, Thus ſaith the Lord; Let my people go, that they may ſerve me, or I will ſend ſwarms of (n) flies upon thee and thy people, which ſhall fill their houſe, and cover the face of the earth. And that thou mayeſt know that this is brought as a judgment upon thee and thy ſubjects, for oppreſſing my people; I will on that day ſeparate the land of Goſhen, in which my ſervants dwell, from the reſt of Egypt, that the flies ſhall not moleſt them.*

Accordingly, upon Pharaoh's obſtinately perſisting to detain the Iſraelites in ſlavery, the next day clouds of ſwarming inſects filled the air, which, in numberleſs troops deſcended to the earth, and with their ſullen and unuſual noiſe, ſurprised and affrighted the wretched inhabitants.

All attempts proved vain and fruitleſs to remove this increaſing evil; their moſt private receſſes could not ſecure them from the poiſonous bitings of theſe revengeful animals, and a ſucceſſion of painted miſery invaded them on all ſides.

Pharaoh's guards could not ſave him from the painful attacks of this flying hoſt, which boldly ſwarmed about, and ſeized the very weapons they ſhould draw in their maſter's defence.

The ſword and ſpear were uſeleſs to repel this airy foe, whoſe penetrating ſting was ſharper than their point.

The magicicians with confuſion looked upon this direful plague, and and no more pretended to offer at any imitation. A general horror filled the towns and fields, and all the country echoed with the cries of tortured men and cattle.

Pharaoh, not able to endure this plague, called preſently for Moſes and Aaron, and in a ſullen diſcontented tone bade them go and ſacrifice to their God, but not beyond the bounds of Egypt.

He was deſirous of relief, but unwilling to part with a people, by whoſe ſlavery he had reaped ſo great advantage; and being a ſtranger and enemy to the true God, did not conceive that the Iſraelites could not acceptably ſacrifice to their God, whilſt under the Egyptian bondage.

Moſes, deſirous of convincing, rather than inflaming the infidel prince, diſcreetly anſwered,—We cannot ſacrifice to our God in this land, for that would be (o) an affront to the Egyptians, and they will be revenged on us: permit us therefore to avoid

(n) *Flies.* So our Engliſh tranſlation: St. *Jerom.* ſays, *All ſorts of flies.* The Septuagint *Kunmwhyan*, a partiular kind of fly, called a *dog-fly*, from its biting. Some tranſlate this a *mixture of beaſts*; the *French*, *une meſlee de beſte*: *Junius* and *Tremellius*, *colluviem*; and *Joſephus* ſeems to understand it of ſeveral ſorts of inſects that infeſted the country, which were never ſeen in Egypt before nor ſince,

(o) *Affront.* That is, if we ſhould ſacrifice thoſe creatures which the Egyptians worſhip for Gods, as the Ox and the ſheep, they will be affronted to ſee us ſacrifice their Gods to our God.

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their resentment, by going three days journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to our God, as he hath commanded us.

If nothing else will serve you, (said Pharaoh) but to go into the desart, I will let you go, but not far. And in return for this concession, entreat your God to remove this plague.

Moses promised to intercede for him, but cautioned Pharaoh to be sincere in his grant. And being gone from his presence, addressed himself to God to remove the plague of flies.

His prayers were heard, and the insects took their flight. But the plagues were no sooner removed, than the tyrant reassumed his former obstinacy, nor would even yet suffer the Israelites to worship the Lord their God, in the way and manner he had directed them.

Upon this high provocation, God sent Moses again to Pharaoh with this message: *Thus saith the God of the* Hebrews. *Let my people go, that they may serve me, or be assured I will visit all thy cattle that are in the field with a grievous murrain; and to make thee still more sensible of my omnipotence, I will by a wonderful distinction, preserve the cattle of my people, whilst I destroy those of the* Egyptians.

The awful threatnings was most severely executed the very next day, through the obstinacy of the king. The generous horse loathed his full manger and loved pastures, and sunk under his rider; the ass and camel could no longer support their burdens, or their own weight; the labouring ox dropped down dead before the plough; the harmless sheep died bleating, and the faithful dogs lay gasping by them.

Nothwithstanding this horrid spectacle, Pharaoh continued his former temper, resolved still to brave Heaven with his impious perversness: and remembring what Moses had said of the preservation of the Israelites cattle, he sent to Goshen to learn how it had fared with them, and was assured there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead; by which he might have seen this was no casualty, but a direct judgment upon him, exactly answering the divine prediction. Notwithstanding this, he continued in his former resolution, not to let the Israelites go.

As all these means proved ineffectual to soften the obdurate heart of this impious monarch, the Almighty therefore determined to surprize him with a plague, without giving him any warning, and immediately commanded Moses and Aaron to take handsful of ashes from the furnace, and before Pharaoh's face to throw them in the air.

The ashes soon spread the dire contagion, and the tainted air infected the Egyptians blood with its poisonous influence; which appeared upon their skin in swelling (*p*) scabs

(*p*) *Scabs.* This, in Deuteronomy, is one of the curses with which disobedience to God is threatened; *The Lord shall smite thee with the blotch of* Egypt, &c. From hence I believe came the calumny, which *Trig, Pompeius, Diod, Siculus, Tacitus,* and other Heathens cast upon the Hebrews, viz. that they were expelled Egypt, for being scabbed and leprous: which mistake was easy; instead of being dismissed for having brought those diseases upon the Egyptians.

and ulcers, and their whole constitution became a noisome spring of sores. This plague was so torturing that the magicians, who possibly once more would have tried their skill to see if they could regain their credit, were not able to stand before Moses, for it affected them as well as the rest of the Egyptians.

Pharaoh's obstinacy, which before proceeded from an implacable hatred to the chosen people of God, now arose from a judicial hardness of heart, as the immediate effect of a divine and supernatural cause. The Almighty rendered the very powers of Heaven subservient to his divine purpose, giving this charge to his servant Moses, *Go early in the morning to the king of* Egypt, *and tell him, that I the God of the* Hebrews *demand the liberty of my people, that they may worship me: which if he refuse, he may be assured, I will shower my (q) plagues upon him, and his people; and I will make him know that I am the only God on earth.*

Say further to him; (r) If when lately I smote the cattle with the murrain, I had smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, thou hadst been cut off from the earth. But I have reserved thee to shew my power upon, and by the judgments I shall inflict upon him, I will publish my name to all the world.

Oppress not, nor detain my people; for if thou dost, to (s) morrow by this time, unless thou submittest thyself, I will send such a storm of Hail from Heaven upon Egypt, *as never was known since it was (t) a nation.*

And that thou mayst not lose what cattle the murrain left, which being not in the field, escaped that plague, send thy servants, and let them drive them under shelter; for upon every man and beast, which shall be found in the field, the storm shall fall, and they shall surely die.

So heedless as well as impious was Pharaoh, that even this declaration could not induce him to preserve himself, or his people: but some of them, who had been (u) witnesses to the dreadful wrath of God, made a prudent use of the divine caution, and housed their cattle in time, by which means they were preserved.

The time appointed being come, Moses attended the hardened king, and to convince him of the truth of what he had threatened him with, waved his wand in the air, which soon began to murmur in imperfect sounds, till full-charged clouds with

(q) *Plagues.* By plagues, in this place, (viz. Exod. ix. 14) is not meant, that God would send all the plagues which he afterwards inflicted successively, but those which attended this plague from Heaven, as hail, thunder, lightning, and rain.

(r) *If*, &c. Here God shews that he wanted not power to destroy Pharaoh and his subjects for oppressing his people Israel; but that he reserved him for greater punishment.

(s) *Morrow.* It is very common in Scripture to find the particular time expressed; which is used only to shew the certainty of Providence.

(t) *A Nation.* The Hebrew word by which Egypt is called *Mesraim* (i. e.) Straitness, and to this day it is called by the Turks *Mesra*, or the land of confinement.

(u) *Witnesses.* Exod. ix. 20. It is said of those that secured their cattle by housing them before the storm, that *they feared the Lord;* which implies not a reverential fear, but a servile fear, into which they had been terrified by the judgments God had inflicted on them.

impetuous

impetuous force burst and discharged themselves in such terrible peels of thunder, as shook the whole frame of nature. This was succeeded by a stony shower of monstrous hail, such as winter never yet produced, which covered the ground with the scattered ruins of trees and houses, and the dead bodies of men and beasts.

Nor did the divine vengeance stop here; the Heavens became a body of liquid fire, which darting on the ground, glided over the waters, and filled every place with dreadful horror.

This shocked the haughty tyrant; who seeing nature, as he imagined, ready to dissolve, melted into penitence, and confessed himself guilty.

But this being an act of necessity, not of virtue, it died with his fear, which Moses foresaw; for when Pharaoh begged him to intercede to God for him, and to remove this plague. Moses told him, he would answer his request, but assured him, he knew he did not mean sincerely; and that his repentance was only the effect of his fright.

Of this the Lord, as he had done before, gave Moses notice; *I have hardened his heart, and the hearts of his ſervants, that I may ſhew theſe my wonders before them, and that thou mayſt tell in the hearing of thy ſons, and the* Israelites *to ſucceeding generations, what prodigies I have wrought in* Egypt, *that ye may all know that I am the Lord, the Almighty* Jehovah.

Wherefore go to Pharaoh, *and tell him, thus ſaith the Lord God of the* Hebrews, *why doſt thou perſiſt in thy obſtinacy? let my people go, that they may ſerve me, or I will bring the locuſt into thy land to morrow, which ſhall come in ſuch ſwarms, as ſhall cover the ſurface of the earth, and devour all the products of it that have eſcaped the former plagues. And this ſhall prove ſuch a plague as none of thy predeceſſors ever ſaw.*

Having thus delivered the will of the Almighty, his servant Moses retired, which the courtiers perceiving, and fearing he was gone to call down more plagues upon them, very roughly accosted their king, desiring him to let the Israelites go to serve their God; lest he destroy them all for his obstinacy. Their importunity prevailed more than God's threats and judgments; therefore sending for Moses and Aaron, he told them they might go and serve their God; but only the men, not women or children. Moses insisted upon all the Israelites going, young and old, sons and daughters; nay, and their flocks and herds: *For we muſt hold a feaſt*, says he, *to the mighty* Jehovah, *and all muſt be at it.* This put Pharaoh out of temper, for he looked upon this demand as very insolent; therefore he bad them look to it, and consider well what they insisted on, and in a very threatening manner dismissed them.

The servant of God being again repulsed, another judgment was inflicted on the miserable subjects of an infidel king; for Moses by the divine command stretched out his hand with the rod in it, and immediately a

scorching

(x) scorching hot wind blew all that day and the night following, which by next morning drove endless legions of devouring (y) locusts, which left the earth as naked and depopulate, as if the northern storms of winter had invaded it. The happy product of the fertile Nile, and all that bountiful nature afforded, was carried off by these airy pillagers. Pharaoh began to be a little more sensibly touched with this plague than any of the former; for he plainly foresaw that the destruction of the fruits of the earth must in time prove the destruction of man and beast; therefore calling hastily for Moses and Aaron, he in a more suppliant manner than usual addressed himself to them: *I have indeed offended* Jehovah, *your God, in refusing to obey his command, and you in breaking my word so often with you; forgive me this offence, and intreat your God to avert this judgment, that I and my people perish not by devouring famine.*

Moses answered his request, and once more compassionating the case of the justly afflicted king, beseeched the Almighty in his behalf, and the locusts were driven by force of a westerly wind into the (z) Red Sea.

This plague thus removed, Pharaoh returned to his former obstinacy and contempt of God's commands, and refused to let the Israelites go.

CHAP. III.

THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS. DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN THREATENED. INSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER. LATE THREATENING FULFILLED. EXPULSION OF THE ISRAELITES. THE FIRST-BORN DEVOTED TO THE LORD. GOD DIRECTS THE ISRAELITES BY AN EXTRAORDINARY TOKEN IN THEIR PASSAGE OUT OF EGYPT, THE ISRAELITES ARE PURSUED BY PHARAOH, WHO, TOGETHER WITH HIS HOST, ARE DROWNED IN THE RED-SEA. THE ISRAELITES PRAISE GOD FOR THEIR DELIVERANCE.

ALL these methods proving ineffectual to reduce Pharaoh to obedience

(x) *Scorching*, &c. Our translation has *East Wind*. The vulgar has *Ventum ureniem*, a *burning Wind*. The *Septuagint*, a *South Wind*; which opinion I follow, (though the Jews will unanimously have it to be an *East Wind*) because the South parts of Africa were most infested with locusts, where they are in some places the chief food of the inhabitants.

(y) *Locusts*. They are like the creature which we properly call a grass-hopper. Wonderful are the accounts which authors report of these kinds of armies of locusts, and of the order and regularity of their marches. *Aldrenandus* and *Fincilius* say, that in the year of our Lord 852, they were seen to fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in manner of a formed army, divided into several squadrons, and having their quarters apart when they rested; that the captain marched a day's journey before the rest, to choose the most opportune place for their camp: that they never removed till Sun rising; at which time they went away in as much order as an army of men could do; that at last having done great mischief wheresoever they passed, after prayers made to God, they were driven by a violent wind into the Belgic Ocean, and there drowned; but being cast again by the sea upon the shore, caused a great pestilence in the country. Some add, that they covered an hundred and forty acres of land at a time.

St. *Jerome* upon *Joel* speaks thus: "When the armies of locusts came lately into these parts and filled all "the air, they flew in so great order, that slates in a pave- "ment cannot be laid more regularly, neither did they "stir one inch out of their ranks."

A number of locusts were seen and taken near London in 1748, which measured from two to four inches long.

(z) *Red Sea*. Various are the opinions of interpreters about

obedience to the divine command, God bid Moses stretch forth his hand, towards Heaven, that there might be darkness over the land of Egypt, so thick that it might be (*a*) felt.

Moses obeyed the heavenly command, and immediately such solid clouds of darkness invaded the sky, that nature at once seemed to be involved in one dreadful eclipse; the sun no longer encouraged the lower world with his cheerful beams; the moon, with the stars, no more illuminated the darkened air; and all things put on the dismal aspect of death, as if nature were returning to her original chaos.

This scene of horror lasted for three days, which so affected the haughty king, that though he had long stood immoveable against the threatenings and judgments of God; yet now fearing an universal dissolution, and frighted at the continual (*b*) terrors of this long night, he began to relent a little, and, calling for Moses, said to him, *Ye may go with your little ones, and ſerve the Lord; but for my ſecurity I would have you leave your flocks and herds behind you.*

As this was not absolutely consistent with the divine command, Moses would not deign to accept it; assuring him that it was the express command of their God to remove with all their substance; and that they knew not in what manner they were to offer sacrifice to their God, till they came to the wilderness.

The haughty tyrant, incensed at his non-compliance with what he himself esteemed a very great indulgence, commanded him to be gone; and assured him, that if ever he appeared before him again, it should cost him his life.

Moses took him at his word, and promised never more to see his face; but before he left his presence, he denounced this judgment to him:—*Thus ſaith the Lord, About midnight will I enter Egypt, and all the firſt-born of the land ſhall die, from the firſt-born of Pharaoh that ſhould ſucceed him in the throne, to the firſt-born of the ſervant in the mill; and all the firſt-born of beaſts ſhall die.*

And to possess Pharaoh and his subjects with the greater fear of this judgment, he told them, There should be such great lamentations through all Egypt, as never was known before. And to convince them of his care and indulgence of his own people, he told the Egyptians, that not the least harm should befall the Israelites.

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about the epithet *red* given to this sea. Some will have it so called from the reflection of the sun upon it from the red mountains near it. Others, that it is naturally red of itself. But the most common opinion is, that at particular seasons great shoals of sand are washed down into it from the Ethiopian gulphs, which, being of a reddish appearance, gives the same colour to the water.

(*a*) *Felt.* So the *Septuagint* and most translations render it. Some will have this to be an hyperbolical expression, to set forth the excess of this plague: Though whether this darkness was really in the air, or only in their eyes, which might be blinded for a time; or whether a suspension of light from the act of illumination in that country; or whether it were from a black, thick and damp vapour, which possessed all the air, it is impossible to determine.

(*b*) *Terrors.* It is the opinion of several, that during this three days darkness, the Egyptians were frighted with terrible visions and spectres; which opinion is very much strengthened in *Wiſdom*, xvii. 6. Undoubtedly from such unusual darkness they thought the whole order of the world to be overset and dissolved.

Though the King still bade him defiance, to let him see he despised his threats, he told him he would so humble his subjects with the succeeding plague, that even his counsellors and prime ministers of state should come and fall down at his feet and intreat him and the Israelites to be gone. And after that, said Moses, I will go out.

Having thus delivered his last message to the King of Egypt with a more than usual warmth of zeal, he took his leave.

As the chosen people of God were not only oppressed in their persons but also in their property, by the tyranny of the Egyptians, it pleased the Lord to encourage his servant Moses to support them in their deliverance from bondage, to promise them favour with their former oppressors, and instruct him to borrow of them their most valuable commodities.

It was on the fourteenth day of the first (*c*) month that Moses took his leave of Pharaoh: and God, having predetermined his people's deliverance at this time, had instituted the passover some days before, and given direction to Moses how it should be observed; which was after this manner.

Every family of Israel, or if the family was too little, two neighbouring families joining together, was on the tenth day of this month to take a lamb, or kid, and shut it up till the fourteenth day of this month; and then it was to be killed.

The lamb or kid must be a male of the first year, and without blemish; a type of Christ who was perfectly innocent. When it was killed they were to take a bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood, which for that end was preserved in a vessel, they were to wipe the upper door-post, and the side-posts of the outer door of every house where they did eat it, and they were not to stir out of the house till the next morning.

This was done to the intent, that when the angel of the lord should go from House to house through all Egypt, to slay the first-born of both man and beast of the Egyptians, he seeng the blood smeared on the door-posts, might pass over those houses, wherein the Israelites were eating the lamb or kid, without doing them any hurt; and from the angel's thus passing over their houses, this institution was called the passover. The lamb or kid was to be eaten neither raw nor sodden, but roasted with fire, and to be dressed whole: nor might a bone of it be broken. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs, in memory of the severe bondage they had undergone

(*c*) *Month.* The Israelites, till they had been captives in Babylon, which was about eight hundred years after they came out of Egypt, counted their months without any name according to their number, the first, second, third month, &c. And before their coming out of Egypt, they began their years in that month, which was afterwards called *Tifri*, (which took in part of the seventh and part of the eighth month with us) and they continued always after to begin their year with that month for civil affairs; according to which computation, that month, which was afterwards *Nisan*, in which God delivered *Israel* out of Egypt was their seventh. And this *Nisan* answers to part of those two months, which from the Heathen Romans, are commonly called *March* and *April*.

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in Egypt. If there remained more than could be eaten, it was to be burnt; and no stranger might eat of it, unless he was circumcised. As to the manner of eating it at this time only, they were to eat it as in haste, with their cloaths on, and their staves in their hands: which ceremony shewed their eager desire of deliverance, and their readiness for it.

These precautions being taken in obedience to the divine command, for the preservation of the Israelites, at midnight the (*d*) Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh to the first-born of the (*e*) captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of the cattle were smitten, as the Lord had that morning denounced to Pharaoh and Moses.

This severe stroke of divine vengeance at length alarmed the obdurate Pharaoh and blinded subjects, who waked each other with their dismal cries, and the horror of the night added to their confusion: the expiring groans of their beloved first-born deeply affected them, and they expected a succession of death upon themselves; Pharaoh, hoping to avert an untimely death, in haste sent for Moses and Aaron, and commanded them to be gone with all speed. *Get you forth,* says he, *from among my people, both you and the children of Israel, and go serve your God as ye have said; and take your flocks and your herds, as ye demanded, and be gone: I'll stand no longer on terms with you, only pray for me, that this plague may go no further.* Nor were the people less importunate for them to be gone; for they concluded, if the Israelites tarried any longer among them, that they should all die.

Moses having by God's express command directed the children of Israel to borrow of their Egyptian neighbours jewels of silver and gold, and the Lord having disposed the Egyptians to lend them what they asked for, they, by these means (*f*) spoiled the Egyptians of their most valuable things; nay, so fearful were they that some heavy judgment would attend their longer continuance among them, that they forced them away, not suffering them to finish their bread, but obliging them to tie up their dough in cloths, and carry it away at their backs unbaked.

The Lord having thus avenged on the Egyptians, the obstinacy of their King in detaining his people in bondage; they now on a sudden thrust them out, as God had foretold, and drove them away in great haste.

(*d*) *Lord.* Some think God inflicted this plague upon the Egyptians immediately himself; because he says, *Exod.* xi. 4. *about midnight will I go in the midst of Egypt.* And to the same effect, *ch.* xii. 12. But it is an ordinary manner of speech to attribute that to God, which was done by one of his angels: and that this was an angel, appears out of *ch.* xii, 23. *The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.*

(*e*) *Captive*—That is, those meaner servants, that are put to grinding, as *Samson* afterwards was, when he had lost at once both his eyes and liberty.

(*f*) *Spoiled.* This was not to be drawn into an example, how excusable and justifiable soever in the Israelites, on the account that God, who is the sovereign Lord of all, both persons and things, did so order it; and that it might be looked on as a just retribution for the many and great injuries done by the Egyptians to the Israelites.

So

So punctual were the ancient servants of God in complying with the request of their dying friends or relations, or any who had signalized themselves in the service of the faithful, that we find men, notwithstanding the hasty departure of the Israelites, did not forget to take the bones of Joseph, which he, dying in the faith of their deliverance had solemnly engaged the children of Israel to carry up out of Egypt with them, and which had now lain entombed there more than a hundred and forty years.

The place of general rendezvous for the Israelites was *Rameſes*, the chief city of Goshen; from whence, on the fifteenth day of their (*g*) first month, they set forward as regularly as a well ordered army, being in number about six hundred thousand men, besides children, and marched to *Succoth*. With them went a mixed multitude that were not Israelites, but strangers of several nations, who, having seen the calamities that Egypt had suffered for Israel's sake, chose rather to seek their fortunes with the Israelites, than tarry in a country almost made desolate.

To perpetuate the (*h*) remembrance of this glorious display of divine power and goodness, in their behalf, God, by Moses, commanded the people of Israel, that when they should be brought into the land of Canaan, they should set apart and devote unto the Lord their first-born, both of man and beast, as a token that God, for their sakes, had slain all the first-born in Egypt.

The Israelites being to remove from Succoth, the Lord, for their encouragement and security, went before them, in the day-time in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire to direct and guide them; and though the Philistines' country was the nearest for them to pass, yet, lest they, seeing them with an armed force oppose their passage, should repent of their deliverance, and wilfully turn back to Egypt, he led them about through the way of the wilderness of the *red ſea*, and marching to *Etham* they encamped there on the borders of the wilderness, which took its name from that place. From thence drawing them down more to the *red ſea*, he caused them to encamp there, between the straits of the mountains in sight of the sea. This was the divine pleasure, that the Almighty Jehovah, might more fully triumph over the Egyptian tyrant: For he had told Moses, that Pharaoh would say, They were intangled in the wilderness; and that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, that he should pursue them and be destroyed. This succeeded accordingly; for, after the Egyptians had buried their dead first-born, Pharaoh, being told that the Israelites were gone, and concluding from their long and speedy

(*g*) *Firſt Month.* This was afterwards called *Niſan* and *Abib*, which takes in part of the first, and part of the second month with us.

(*h*) *Remembrance.* God, willing to preserve in the minds of his people the remembrance of so awful an event, ordered that the first-born of every family should be immediately devoted to his service.

marches

marches, that they fled indeed, repented that he had let them go: His bounty in dismissing the inslaved Israelites scarce survived his deliverance from the angel's slaughtering hand, and rage and revenge succeeded to his late fear and grief for the death of the first-born: He forgot the almighty power, that by a succession of plagues had so lately afflicted him and his people, and regardless of the danger of provoking it again, blindly pursued his own fate, instead of the Israelites.

Raising all the force, which the shortness of the time would admit, he headed them, and immediately pursued the departing Israelites, in order to inslave them deeper.

He had with him six hundred chosen (*i*) chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt besides, that could be got ready at so short a warning, with their commanders, and (*k*) horsemen, with which he pursued them; and on the sixth day after their departure out of Egypt, came up with them, and found them encamped by the sea: so that, as he had proposed to himself, he found the Israelites beset on every side, the sea in front, huge mountains on their flank, and his own army in their rear.

The sight of this army, and their old oppressor at the head of them, struck terror into the poor Israelites, who, soon fogetting their new-gotten liberty, betrayed a servile mind, and envied the slavish condition they but lately deplored.

They reproached Moses as the author of all their imaginary woes, and wished to resume the yoke they had but now shaken off. Long custom had inured them to a state of slavery, and continual servitude of body debased their spirits.

But pious Moses, not resenting their reproachful taunts, but pitying their abject fear, cheered them up with the assurance of God's protection and care, and said, *The Lord will fight for you, and complete your deliverance; and this numerous army of the Egyptians, which now terrifieth you, shall no more affright or moleſt you.*

Moses, before this encouraging assurance, had addressed himself to God, who admonished him no more at this juncture to apply himself to him, but to press the murmuring Israelites to move forward, giving him instructions how to secure his people and afflict their enemies.

The sacred rod, by which Moses had formerly wrought so many miracles, still retained its virtues, as inimitable; but now more fatally destructive: *Lift up thy rod*, saith the Lord, *and ſtretch thy hand over the ſea, and divide it; and the children of Iſrael ſhall go on dry land (l) through the midſt of the ſea; and I will*

(*i*) *Chariots.* These are the first Chariots that were used in war; in which it was the custom long after for soldiers to fight. They were armed with scythes, and being drawn by horses against the enemy, they cut down all in their way; the men in them using darts and spears, and such like offensive weapons, to annoy the enemy. See Cæsar's account of the ancient Britons.

(*k*) *Horſemen.* *Joſephus* writes, that, besides these chariots, Pharaoh took with him fifty thousand horsemen, and two hundred thousand footmen.

(*l*) *Through.* That the Israelites went not directly across

will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, that they ſhall purſue them; and there will I get me honour upon the ruin of Pharaoh, and his mighty army.

To convince the doubting intimidated Israelites of the peculiar favour and regard which God bore towards them, as his chosen people, the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, in the pillar of the cloud, removed and went behind them, by which means it kept the two camps apart all night; and the cloudy side, being next the Egyptians, cast a darkness towards them: but the fiery side being next the Israelites gave them light.

Israel being thus secured from the terrifying sight of their enemies, Moses waved the sacred rod over the sea, and immediately a strong east-wind blew, and drove the sea back from the land; and, dividing the waters, made a dry and safe passage for the Israelites, who, under the conduct of their great guide, entered the sandy plain, and with amazement beheld the till then, sacred wonders of the deep. Enchanted with the floods, they boldly marched on, and instead of being terrified with the sight of a pursuing enemy, were entertained with the pleasing view of the sea's old spoils, and the treasures of the divided Main.

The Egyptians, actuated by fury and revenge, pursued the tract, and not suspecting but that they with with their chariots and horsemen might safely follow where the Israelites, being but footmen, went before, enter in after them to the midst of the sea. But when in the Morning (*m*) Watch the Lord had looked through the pillar of fire and cloud upon the Egyptians, and throwing their chariots off the wheels, had disordered their army: the Egyptians saw their error, and said one to another, *Let us fly from the face of Iſrael, for Jehovah fighteth for them againſt us.*

But it was too late to fly; for Moses at God's command, waving the sacred wand again, the sea returned to its strength; and the divided parts suddenly uniting, covered the thirsty bottom, whilst horror and confusion invaded the frighted Egyptians. They heard and saw the roaring waves break loose from their invisible chain, and with helpless speed endeavoured to avoid their relentless fury, but in vain; the mighty God of Jacob will avenge himself on the obstinate infidels, and their ruin shall be a lasting monument of his justice and his vengeance.

Thus did the Lord rescue the Israelites from the King of Egypt, and his mighty army; which being cast on the shore, was a delightful specta-

across the sea from shore to shore, but took a semi-circular compass in the sea and returned on shore on the same side, is the opinion of many learned men, both ancient and modern. And indeed their going out of the wilderness of *Etham* into the sea, and their coming out of the sea into the wilderness of Etham again (as it is plain they did) and went three days journey in the wilderness of Etham after they came out at the sea, gives much countenance to that opinion.

(*m*) *Watch.* This is reckoned to begin at the *third*, and reach to the *ſixth* hour in the morning.

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cle to the Israelites, and a confirmation of the power of their Almighty God, who had delivered them from inevitable ruin. This created an awful reverence in them, not only to God himself, but his servant Moses, their happy guide, by whose hand God had wrought so many wonders for their preservation and safety.

Being now safely got to shore again, Moses and the Israelites, in grateful acknowledgment of their deliverance sung a triumphant (*n*) song; in which *Miriam* the prophetess, sister to Moses and Aaron, joined, taking a timbrel in her hand, and followed by the Israelitish women with timbrels and dances, answered the men, repeatedly and alternately, some parts of the song.

CHAP. IV.

DEARTH OF WATER. BITTER WATERS ARE SWEETENED. DEARTH OF BREAD. PROVISION IS SENT FROM HEAVEN. PEOPLE AGAIN MURMUR ON ACCOUNT OF A DEARTH OF WATER. ARE MIRACULOUSLY SUPPLIED. ISRAEL OVERCOMES AMALEK. MOSES ENTERTAINS JETHRO, AND TAKETH HIS ADVICE. GOD'S MESSAGE FROM THE MOUNT, AND TERRIBLE APPEARANCE.

HAVING thus rendered their grateful tribute of praise to their Almighty deliverer, Moses led the children of Israel from the Red Sea into the desart of *Shur* or *Etham*, in which they marched three days without finding any water; which, to so great a number of people, in so hot a country and season must needs be very irksome. But at length they came to a place where there was water enough, but so (*o*) bitter, that they could not drink it. This disappointment inflamed their thirst, and increased their dissatisfaction; and though it was but three or four days since they so joyfully and thankfully praised God for their deliverance from the Oppressions of the Egyptians, yet they murmured against Moses, asking him what they should drink?

Moses was sensible of the calamity under which they laboured; and fearing they should by their future murmurings provoke the Lord to punish them as they deserved, he straightway addressed himself to him in their behalf; who no sooner heard the complaint, but redressed it; directed Moses to a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they became sweet, and the people satisfied their thirst.

Their pressing wants being thus wonderfully and amply supplied, it might be imagined that after this, and so many former tokens of the interposition of the divine power and goodness in their behalf, they would no longer mistrust the goodness of their Covenant-God; but their faith scarcely survived his miracles.

(*n*) *Song.* This song is set down in *Exod.* xv. from *v.* 1 to 20, and which in the *Revelations*, *ch.* xv. 7. has the honour to be joined to the Song of the Lamb.

(*o*) *Bitter.* From the bitterness of the waters, the place took the name of *Marah*, which signifies bitterness.

From

From *Marah* they marched to *Elim*, where they found better accommodations; for there were (*p*) twelve wells of water, and seventy palm, or date tsees.

Here it may be supposed they made some stay; for when they removed from hence, and came to the wilderness of *sin*, which is between *Elim* and *Sinai*, it was the fifteenth day of the second month, which was just a month from the day on which they set forward out of Egypt.

Here again the Israelites fell into a general mutiny against Moses and Aaron. The sight of a barren wilderness and shortness of provisions, made them distrust God and break into very indecent expressions; *Would to God*, cry'd they in their discontent, *we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, where we had plenty of bread and meat; for now ye have brought us into this desart, where we must perish with famine.*

This ungrateful treatment of his servants, the Lord resented, as done to himself, and of which Moses and Aaron made them sensible; for, said they, *Your murmurings are not only against us, but against the Lord; who hath heard them, and ye shall soon know that it was the Lord that brought you out of Egypt; whose arm is not shortened, but can make a provision for you as miraculous as your deliverance.*

The Lord, therefore, to awe this murmuring people into a belief of his power and providence, having first shewed his glory in the cloud, told them by Moses, that at evening they should eat flesh, and in the morning be filled with bread; which he made good, by causing quails to come up so thick in the evening, that they covered the camp, and afforded the Israelites a sufficiency of flesh.

And in the morning, when the dew was gone, there lay upon the ground a little white round thing, as small as the hoar frost, and like coriander seed for shape; which when the Israelites saw, they wondering said one to another, (*q*) what is this? For they knew not what it was. But God was pleased by Moses to give them a direction in the gathering and use of it.

First, it was to be gathered fresh (*r*) every morning; all that was gathered was to be spent the same day. And when some of them, either out of curiosity or diffidence, that they might have a reserve, kept some of it till the next morning, it putrefied and stunk. They were to gather it by measure, according to the number of heads in every family.

On the seventh day, which was the Sabbath

(*p*) *Twelve.* Some of the ancient Fathers who turned every thing into allegory, tell us that the twelve fountains were types of the Twelve Apostles and the seventy Palm Trees of the Seventy Disciples.

(*q*) *What*, &c. Our translation and some others, make Moses fall into a plain contradiction in relating this story of the *Manna*, *Exod.* xvi. 14. which they render thus: *And when the Children of Israel saw it, they said to one another it is Manna, for they wist not what it was.* But the most ancient Hebrew Manuscripts, the *Septuagint*, and St. *Jerome's* Versions, have the words as follow, which preserves the purity of the sense. *The Israelites seeing this, said one to another, What is this? For they knew not what it was.*

(*r*) *Every morning.* This was to signify to the Israelites, that they should patiently depend upon God's providence

Sabbath, there was none to be found; therefore they were to gather a double portion on the sixth day, and lay it up for the the seventh day, which being kept by God's appointment, and for that use, did not corrupt.

This was to them instead of bread: and of this they did eat forty years, till they arrived on the borders of Canaan. And as a memorial of it, that after-generations might see the bread with which he had fed their forefathers in the wilderness, God appointed that an (*y*) Omer of this Manna should be put up in a pot, and laid up before the Lord.

The Almighty not only supplied the wants of the discontented Israelites in the most ample manner; but farther to convince them of his peculiar favour and regard, directed their marches from place to place, and ordered their encampments.

Accordingly they moved from the desart of *Sin*, and encamped in (*s*) *Rephidim*, where they had no water. Here again they fell into their old way of distrusting God's providence, which they well knew had never hitherto failed them; and forgetting the late miraculous supplies, they reproached Moses for his ill conduct and neglect of them. Moses meekly rebuked them, and cautioned them not to reflect on him, for, in so doing, they affronted the Lord. But thirst inflaming them, they regarded not his cautions and grew more mutinous, charging him with a design of bringing them out of Egypt to kill them with thirst.

These complaints and reproaches deeply affected Moses, who immediately addressed himself to God for relief in this distress, expostulating with him thus; *What shall I do with this People? Thirst makes them impatient, and they are ready to stone me.* Considering the many instances of God's providence, notwithstanding their present necessity, the Israelites had no reason to distrust. However, the Lord had compassion on Moses, and did also pity and bear with the people; *Give order to the people*, said he, *to march; and take thy rod, with which thou didst smite the river, and take the elders of the people with thee, and go thou on before, and behold, I will stand before thee upon the rock of Horeb, and thou shalt strike the rock, which shall yield water for the people to drink.*

Moses did as God commanded, and in memory of the mutiny of the Israelites, he named the place *Massah* and *Meribah*, which signified temptation and strife.

But the faith and fortitude of the Israelites were put to a more severe trial before they could remove from *Rephidim*; for an army of the (*t*) *Amalekites* was at their heels, and ready to attack them. Moses there-

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dence from day to day; in which respect it might be a type of that *heavenly bread*, which Christ taught his disciples to pray for, *Mat.* vi. 11. *Give us this day our daily bread*,

(*r*) *Omer.* This was the proportion daily allowed to one man, and is computed to contain of English measure three pints and a half, and a fifth part of a pint.

(*s*) *Rephidim*, *Exod.* xvii, 1. Moses does not here observe every place where the Israelites encamped, as he doth in *Numb.* xxxiii. but only those places where some remarkable thing was done.

(*t*) *Amalekites.* These were the descendants of *Esau*, and in memory of their having opposed the Israelites, God charged his people never to make peace with them-

upon ordered *Joshua*, a valiant young man that always attended him, to draw out a party of choice men against the next morning, and to give the Amalekites battle; and said, *I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand.*

Joshua obeyed; and having drawn up his men, Moses in the morning, while the two armies engaged, went up to the top of the hill, taking Aaron and Hur with him, and holding up the rod of God, as an ensign in his hand, Israel taking courage from thence prevailed; but when, through weariness, he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed; therefore Aaron and Hur, observing that Moses's hands, through a continued waving of the rod, were grown feeble and weary, took a stone, and laid it under him, and standing one on each side of him, held up his hand steady till the going down of the sun; in which time Joshua routed the Amalekite army, and put them to the sword.

This success in their first martial enterprize very much encouraged Joshua and the Israelites; and that so remarkable an action might be transmitted to posterity, God commanded it to be recorded in a book, and bade Moses rehearse it to Joshua, the general, to animate him to future service; for, saith the Lord, *I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.*

And for a memorial of this victory, Moses built an altar to sacrifice thereon for it, and called it (*u*) *Jehovah Nissi;* because, said he, the Lord hath sworn that he will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The Israelites soon after came near to the place where God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and not far from his father-in-law Jethro's habitation; Jethro having heard of all that God had done for Moses and his people Israel, and understanding they were now near him, took his daughter Zipporah, Moses's wife, with their two sons, *Gershom* and *Eliezer,* and brought them to him to the Israelitish camp; where, after mutual salutations and embracings, Moses gave Jethro a particular account of the Lord's dealing with Pharaoh and the Egyptians in defence of Israel, and of all that had befallen them during their march thither.

Jethro being a (*x*) devout man, testified his joy by rendering solemn praise to God, and acknowledging his sovereignty, offering at the same time a burnt-offering and sacrifices of thanksgiving to God, in which Aaron and all the elders of Israel joined with him, and feasted together.

During Jethro's stay in the camp, he observed the great weight of business under which Moses laboured in hearing the complaints, and determining the differences of so great a people; and therefore, being a wise and experienced man himself, he advised his son-in-law to substitute certain subordinate officers, properly quali-

(*u*) *Jehovah Nissi.* That is, the Lord is my banner, as he declared by holding up his rod in his hands.

(*x*) *Devout.* From the character of Jethro, it appears that he and the *Midianites* had some knowledge of the true God, although greatly obscured, which shews the necessity of divine Revelation, in order to lead men to happiness.

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fied, men of sincerity and abilities, such as feared God, and hated covetousness, to be rulers; some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens, who should hear and end all smaller matters among the people, and refer the greater and more weighty causes only to him; assuring him that, if with God's approbation he did follow this advice, it would be better both for the people and himself.

Moses approved of his counsel, and immediately put it in practice, to the great ease of himself and the people. Jethro, seeing things thus settled, took his leave of his son-in-law, and returned to his own land.

Three (*x*) months after the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, they left Rephidim, and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, before the mount of God.

Here it pleased God to summons his servant Moses, and command him to remind his people Israel of the signal proofs he had given of his gracious regard; and also to assure them that, though they had mistrusted both his truth and power, yet, if they would constantly bear in mind the covenant he had established with them, he would manifest farther tokens of his love toward them, and signalize them from all other nations upon earth, as a people more immediately devoted to the service of their God.

Moses having communicated this to the elders and people, they unanimously answered, That whatsoever the Lord had commanded them, they would obediently perform. Moses returned the people's answer to God, who said to Moses, *I will come to you in the darkneſs of a cloud, that the people may ſee ſomething of me, when I ſhall ſpeak to you, and may always believe you.*

Then he commanded him to direct the people to cleanse themselves, and to wash their garments, during two days, and to be ready the third day, on which the Lord would (*y*) descend in the sight of all the people on mount Sinai; that he should mark out bounds about the mountain, which none was to pass before the trumpet began to sound.

These were the preparatory solemnities to the Lord's giving the (*z*) Law; after which followed divers judicial laws intermixed with some ceremonials, and backed with promises of blessings upon the people's obedience.

All this Moses wrote in a book, and then read it to the people; and having, by God's command, brought up Aaron with his two sons, *Nadad* and *Abihu*, and seventy of the elders of Israel, so near that they saw the Divine Majesty, yet they were not smitten by it, but survived the sight.

(*x*) *Months.* This was in the beginning of the month *Sivan*, containing part of *May* and *June*.

(*y*) *Deſcend.* It must be observed here, and likewise in other places of the same nature, that the Scripture suiting itself to man's common way of speaking and thinking assigns such actions to God, as are only proper to the effects. It is said that God descended on the mountain, because he made his presence more visible there, by sensible and surprising effects. It may be also said, it was an angel descended from God, who spoke to Moses, and gave the law; but the text expresses, *Exod.* xix. 20. that it was God himself, who descended upon the top of mount *Sinai*.

(*z*) *Law.* Which contained the Ten Commandments, from thence called the *Decalogue*.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

MOSES GOES UP TO THE MOUNT WITH JOSHUA, AND COMMITS THE CHARGE OF HIS PEOPLE TO AARON AND HUR. RECEIVES THE TABLES OF STONE ON WHICH WERE INSCRIBED THE WORDS OF THE LAW. VARIOUS CEREMONIES INSTITUTED. AARON CONTRIBUTES TO THE IDOLATRY OF THE PEOPLE, WHO ARE SEVERELY CHASTIZED BY MOSES ON HIS RETURN. GOD THREATENS THE PEOPLE. CONVERSES FAMILIARLY WITH MOSES, WHOSE FACE SHINES WITH UNCOMMON LUSTRE. BUILDING OF THE TABERNACLE, AND SETTLING OTHER HOLY CONCERNS.

SOON after Moses, at the divine command, ascended the mount, together with Joshua only, dictating the Elders to tarry for them till they should return, and referring them to *Aaron* and *Hur* for assistance and advice in any difficult case that might be brought before them. Moses was no sooner got up to the mountain of God, but a cloud covered the mount, and the glory of the Lord abode upon it like a devouring fire, in the sight of the children of Israel. The seventh day God called Moses from the midst of the fire, and he entered the midst of the cloud, and went further up the mount, and remained there forty days and as many nights. During which time he received the tables of stone, wherein God himself had written the law; and was instructed by God how the tent or tabernacle should be made, wherein he should be worshipped.

He likewise described the sanctuary, the table for the shew-bread, the altar of frankincense, the altar for the burnt-offerings, the court of the tabernacle, the bason to wash in, the ark, the candlestick, the priestly vestments, and taught him how the priests were to be consecrated, what part of the offering they were to take, and how the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered. God likewise pitched upon the very men to undertake the building, *Bezaleel* of the tribe of *Judah*, and *Aholiab* of the tribe of *Dan*.

In fine, he recommended the keeping of the Sabbath, and having ended the (*a*) discourse, gave Moses two stone tables, containing the Covenant or Law, which were written by the Hand of God.

Whilst Moses was conversing with God upon the mount, and Joshua dutifully waiting his return, the people in the camp growing impatient of his long absence, tumultuously repaired to Aaron; and, as if they despaired of God's protection, because he did not continually work miracles to convince them, they concluded Moses had deserted them; and therefore demanded of Aaron to make them Gods to go before them.

Aaron, who should have restrained them from this madness, too easily complied; and for want of reproving and expostulating with them the unreasonableness of their wild desire, contributed to their idolatry; and, as

(*a*) *Discourse.* See the particulars from the twenty-third to the thirty-second Chapter of Exodus.

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if he had a mind to forward them in this wicked intention he bid them break off the golden (*k*) rings, which were in the ears of their wives and children, and bring them to him. When he had received these, he tied them in a bag, and made a molten (*l*) calf of them, which they owned for their God, saying, *This is thy God, O* Israel, *that brought thee out of the land of* Egypt. Aaron seeing the people so much delighted with their golden God, as if he were possessed with the same idolatrous spirit, built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast to be holden the next day to the Lord. But it proved rather a feast of revelling and luxury; for after they had made their oblations and peace-offerings, they sat down to eat and drink, and spent the whole day in feasting and pleasure.

Moses was in the mount conversing with his God, while the wanton Israelites were revelling in the camp, little suspecting so sudden a change in a people who had so late and solemnly entered into a covenant of obedience to all that God should command. But he, from whom no secret can be hid, was instantly apprised of this sudden revolt; therefore telling Moses what crime the people had committed, he expressed his indignation against their Rebellion and ingratitude; *Go down*, saith he, *for (m) thy people, whom thou broughtest out of* Egypt *have corrupted themselves. I know them to be an obstinate people in many instances; therefore intercede not for them, but see me express my resentments in the destruction of them; and to thee will I transfer the blessings I intended to them, and of thee will I make a great nation.*

But notwithstanding the Israelites frequent rebellions against God, and tumultuous mutinies against him, Moses was so far from seeking his own interest by their destruction, that he interposed with his prayers; and with his importunate intreaties so appeased the Lord, that he desisted from their destruction.

The pious Moses having deprecated the awful stroke of divine vengeance hastened down from the mount, and took Joshua with him, who had, during his stay above, waited for him below. As they went, Joshua, hearing the noise of the people shouting, observed to Moses, that there was a noise of war in the camp. But Moses, who knew the accursed and idolatrous cause of the same, replyed, that the noise was not like that of those which shouted for victory, nor of those that cried for quarter, but of such as rejoiced.

(*k*) *Rings.* These probably were the same which they had borrowed of the Egyptians, for rings are of great antiquity, and were used in Egypt, as emblems of eternity.

(*l*) *Calf.* The reason why they worshipped God rather in the similitude of a calf, than of any other creature, is generally, by expositors, conceived to be from the corruptions they had learned among the Egyptians, (who worshipped their idol *Apis* or *Serapis* in a living Ox, and likewise in an image made in the form and similitude of an Ox with a bushel on his head) in memory, as some say, of Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's providence, who measured out the corn to the people in that extreme dearth.

(*m*) *Thy*, &c. By this expression it seems as if God disowned them any more to be his people, and would cast them off, had not a Mediator interceded in their behalf.

Being come within sight of the camp, Moses spied the calf, and the people dancing before it, which so incensed him, that in a holy rage, at their ingratitude and rebellion, he threw the tables, on which God had with his own hand written the law, against the rock, and brake them to pieces. Then taking the idol calf, to deface it, he first threw it into the fire and burnt it, and grinding it to powder, he took the powder, and strewed it upon the water; and to make them more sensible of their folly in worshipping that as a God, which should pass through their bodies, he made the Israelites drink of the water.

Moses having given the people these manifest tokens of his resentment of their idolatry, chastised Aaron for being accessary to the abominable crime; which Aaron very poorly excused, by urging the mischievous temper of the people; and that he had complied with them for quiet-sake. Moses did not long reason the case with Aaron; for seeing that the people by Aaron's indiscretion were naked, and stripped of the defence and protection which God's presence and favour had been to them, and that too amongst their enemies; and to make a further atonement for this sin, beside that of burning the calf, he went into the midst of the camp, and calling out, said, *Let those who are for the Lord join themselves with me.* Upon which all the sons of Levi, who were not concerned in the late idolatry, repaired to him, whom he ordered to arm, and go through the camp, and slay all the ringleaders of the sedition, with their followers: the Levites thus commissioned fell on, and slew about three thousand men. For this laudable zeal, and ready obedience, Moses (*n*) blessed the family of Levi, assuring them that by this shedding the blood of their idolatrous brethren without favour or distinction, they had consecrated themselves to the Lord, who would not fail to bless them for it.

Though it pleased God to suspend the execution of his wrath upon the ungrateful and unbelieving Israelites; yet he assured them he had in reserve for them a very severe punishment, which on fresh provocation he inflicted in a very aggravated manner.

After this Moses returning to the Lord acknowledged Israel's sin, and asked forgiveness for it, with that earnestness and concern, that he prayed God to blot him out of his (*o*) book, rather than not to pardon them.

(*n*) *Blessed.* This fact did so please God, that he turned away the curse of Jacob against Levi, to a blessing, and conferred upon that tribe the office of the Priesthood, till Christ came in the flesh.

(*o*) *Book.* This way of speaking is evidently grounded upon the numbering of the children of Israel at their coming out of Egypt, and the registering of their names in a scroll or register, as may be seen, Numb. i. The same method was likewise taken at their return from the Babylonish captivity, as may be seen in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; and those, who were inrolled in this book, are said, *to be written for life, or among the living*, for every year they blotted out of this catalogue the names of those who died.

If Moses had desired to be damned, Atheists and Deists might have reason to say, that he had made a very extravagant demand, which looked more like madness than inspiration.

But Dr. *Stillingfleet*, after several others, has proved that he had not the least thought of damnation.

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them. But this was inconsistent with the Divine justice, and therefore God gave him this short answer, *Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

The divine wrath, being in some measure appeased at the intercession of Moses, the Lord commanded him to lead the people to the place he had appointed: but let him know, he was not willing to go along with them, because they were a stiff-necked people, lest they should provoke him to consume them in the way; yet, to shew he had still some tenderness and regard for them, he would send his Angel before them, to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land, that so he might perform the oath, which he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

This was very afflicting news to the Israelites, who now plainly perceived, that God's withdrawing his immediate presence from them was the effect of their rebellion; upon which they mourned, and, to shew their humiliation, they forbore to put on the ornaments. But Moses to humble them the more, and make them more sensible of their sin, took a tent, and pitching it without the camp at a good distance, called it the tabernacle of the congregation: Intimating to them by this, that the Lord was so highly offended with them for their idolatry, that he had removed from them, and would no longer dwell amongst them as he had done before: by which means, every one that sought the Lord was obliged to go to this tabernacle without the camp; and when Moses went to it, as he entered in, the cloudy pillar in which the Lord used to appear, descended and stood at the door of the Tabernacle.

These tokens of the divine wrath rendered the people more careful in observing the motions of Moses; and therefore when he went out of the camp to the tabernacle they rose up, and stood every man at his tent-door looking after him, till he was gone in: And when they saw the cloudy pillar, which they knew was a token of God's presence, they all worshipped. Here the Lord talked with Moses, and permitted Moses to talk (*p*) with him very familiarly; which favour Moses improved to the people's advantage; labouring with much importunity to reconcile God to them.

After which, the Lord having, at Moses's request, and to encourage and comfort him, shewn him so much of his glory as he was capable of seeing, being overcome with this good man's excess of charity, he bade him prepare two new * Tables of Stone, like the

No such thing can be found in what goes before or after; and besides, the whole design of this chaptar is quite opposite to this sort of thought, and runs all on temporal punishments. And this may be gathered from a like prayer of Moses on another occasion, where he says, *If thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee out of hand*, Numb. xi. 15. The Hebrew word also, which is rendered *to blot out*, signifies to *kill* or *destroy*. It is therefore evident, *that to be written in the book of life*, signifies to be under the favour and protection of God, and therefore by Moses desiring to be blotted out of the book, means no more, than that he might die and not be named as the leader of the people.

(*p*) *Talk.* Moses talking familiarly with God is accommodated to man's capacity, which is expressed, Exod. xxxiii. 11. to be *face to face*, as a man speaketh to his friend.

* *Tables of Stone.* It is agreed among the learned in general,

the former, which he had broken, and come up himself alone with them in the morning to Mount Sinai, and I, said he, will write in those tables the words that were in the first.

Moses accordingly rose up early in the morning, and repaired to mount Sinai with the two tables, where prostrating himself before the divine Majesty, who appeared in the cloud on the top of the Mount, most humbly beseeching him to pardon the sins of the people, the Lord favourably received his intercession, and promised to make a covenant with (*q*) his people, upon condition they would keep his commandments; that they would not worship the Gods of the *Canaanites*; that they would make no alliances with the people of that country; that they would have no strange Gods; that they would keep the Sabbath, the Passover, and other festivals ordained by the law.

Moses having continued in the mount forty days and forty nights in communion with God without meat and drink, returned to the people with the two tables of the law; but he knew not that with God's talking with him his face had contracted a (*r*) splendor. Wherefore Aaron and the Israelites being frighted at the lustre of his countenance, durst not approach him; which Moses perceiving, he put a veil upon his face, and then calling the rulers and all the people to him, he gave them in command all that the Lord had charged him with in the mount; and from that time so long as the lustre lasted upon his face, when he talked with the people he put on the veil, but when he went in to speak to the Lord he put it off.

Moses now informed the people, that it was the Lord's will to have a tabernacle built; and that he had commanded him to speak to them to bring in their offerings, which were to consist of materials with which it was to be made. The directions now given were the same with those when Moses went first up to the mount; but, by reason of the people's transgression in idolizing the calf, they were not then delivered to them. This offering was not to be exacted, but the people were to give it voluntarily; to which God so inclined them, that they soon brought in more than was requisite, so that Moses was obliged to cause proclamation to be made to restrain their liberality.

Preparations being made, the charge was delivered to *Bezaleel* and *Aholiah*, two ingenious men, and well skilled in architecture and all manner of workmanship, who employed all the men and women, that had any skill in curious operations.

This tabernacle was a tent covered with curtains and skins, but much

general, that Moses first taught the use of letters to the Jews, and that the Phœnicians learned them from the Jews, and the Grecians from the Phœnicians. The matter upon which men wrote in ruder times was different: some on rinds of trees; some on tiles; some on tables; which last was chiefly in use among the Jews.

(*q*) *His People.* God here calls the children of Israel, *Thy People*, that is, Moses's people; for he would not yet call them his: for this reconciliation of God's was but conditional, and in proportion to their obedience.

(*r*) *Splendor.* The editors of the vulgate Latin have translated the Hebrew word that signifies brightness, *Cornuta*, as if Moses's face had appeared with horns on it. But the Septuagint render it much better, *glorifyed*, to which the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 7. alludes.

much larger than the other tents. It was divided into two parts: the one covered, and properly called the tabernacle; and the other open, called the court. The covered part was again divided into two other parts; the one called the Holy of Holies, the curtains of which were made of embroidered linen of several colours. There were ten curtains, twenty-eight cubits long, and four in breadth, five curtains together made two coverings, which being made fast together covered all the tabernacle. Over the rest there were two other coverings, the one of goats hair, the other of sheep-skins. These veils or coverings were laid on a square frame of planks resting on bases. There were forty-eight large planks, each a cubit and half wide, and ten cubits high, twenty of them on each side, and six at one end to the westward, and one on each corner: each plank was borne on two silver bases; they were let into one another, and held by bars running the length of the planks. The east end was open, and only covered with a curtain. The Holy of Holies was parted from the rest of the tabernacle by a curtain made fast to four pillars, standing ten cubits from the end. The whole length of the tabernacle was thirty-two cubits high, the upper curtain hung on the north and south-sides eight cubits, and on the east and west four cubits.

The court was a spot of ground an hundred cubits long, and fifty in breadth, inclosed by twenty columns, each of them twenty cubits high, and ten in breadth, covered with silver, and standing on copper bases five cubits distant from each other, between which there were curtains drawn, and fastened with hooks. At the east-end was an entrance twenty cubits wide covered with a curtain hanging loose.

The ark was in the sanctuary; it was a square chest made of *Shittim*-wood, two cubits and a half long, and one cubit and a half wide and deep. It was covered with gold plates and had a gold cornice which bore the lid. On the sides of it were rings, to put poles through to carry it. The covering was all of gold, and called the propitiatory or mercy-seat. There were two cherubims on it, which covered it with their wings: the tables of the law were in the ark, which was therefore called the ark of the testimony, or of the covenant.

The table was made of cedar covered with gold, two cubits long, one in breadth, and one and a half in height. About the edge of it was an ornament; it stood on four feet, and had wooden bars plated with gold to carry it on. They laid on it the offering or shew-bread, (which was changed every day,) six loaves at each end, with incense over them. It was not lawful for any but the priests to eat of that bread.

The candlestick was of pure gold, had seven branches, three on each side, and one in the middle: each branch had three knobs like apples, and three sockets in the shape of half almond-shells; that in the middle had four; on each branch was a gold lamp, and there were

gold snuffers and nippers to dress them.

There were two altars, one for the burnt-offerings, five cubits long and wide, and three in height, with a sort of seraphim at each corner. It was hollow, covered both within and without with brass plate, and open both at top and bottom. In the midst of it was a copper-gate, standing on four feet, a cubit and a half high, and fastened with hooks and rings. On it were burned the wood and the offerings. There were all necessaries for that service, as kettles, ladles, tongs, hooks and the rest.

The altar of the incense was but one cubit in length and breadth, and two cubits high. It was plated with gold, and had a crown of gold over it. The altar was in the sanctuary with the ark; that of the burnt-offering was in the tabernacle on the north-side, on the table opposite to it on the south-side, in the court was a great copper bason on a pillar, with several cocks for water to run out, for washing the hands of those that ministered.

The vestments of the high-priest were the breast-plate, the ephod, the robe, the close-coat, the mitre, and the girdle. The ephod, the robe, and the close coat were of linen, and covered the whole body from the neck to the heels. Over all was a purple tunick, a vestment larger and finer wrought, which reached not so low, but at the bottom of it hung pomegranates and bells. The ephod consisted of two bands made of gold thread, and of several colours, made fast to a sort of collar, which hung down before and behind on both shoulders, and meeting, served for a girdle to the tunick or vestment. On the shoulders were two large precious stones, which joined the fore and the hind parts of the ephod, on which were carved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on each of them. The breast-plate being of the same workmanship, but double, was made fast with gold chains to the ephod. It was a square ornament, very thick, and covering the breast. The girdle was the ephod itself crossed, or some other band of the same matter. The mitre was of fine flax; it covered the head; and on the fore-head, was a gold plate, on which were carved these words. THE HOLINESS OF THE LORD.

These were the solemn ornaments belonging to the High Priest: the others were only a simple tunick or vestment, a linen mitre, and a girdle. They had all breeches of linen and cotton, covering the legs and thighs, and reaching up to the waist.

The orders being punctually obeyed, the vestments and other apparatus, were submitted to the inspection of Moses, who having viewed them, and found that all was done as the Lord had commanded, praised God for the people's diligence, and prayed for them. And now all things being ready, on the first day of the first month, in the second year after their departure from Egypt, the tabernacle was by God's immediate command set up, and all its furniture disposed in the proper places.

This done, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled it; so that

that for a while Moses himself was not able to enter it.

This cloud was the signal to the people of Israel, by which they knew when to march, and when to rest. For when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel journied: but if the cloud was not taken up, they journied not until it was.

CHAP. VI.

INSTITUTION OF THE SACRIFICE, AND VARIOUS OTHER CEREMONIES. APPOINTMENT OF AARON AND HIS SONS TO THE PRIESTLY OFFICE. FIRST BURNT OFFERING. TERRIBLE JUDGMENT INFLICTED ON NADAB AND ABIHU. SHELOMETH'S SONS STONED FOR BLASPHEMY. THE ISRAELITES ARE MUSTERED AND ENCAMPED. THE MANNER OF THEIR DISLODGMENT. QUAILS SENT FOR FOOD TO THE ISRAELITES.

THE Tabernacle being set up, and all things prepared, God proceeded to give directions to Moses, and by him to the people, in what manner his public worship, under that dispensation, should be performed, which was by sacrifice; and this was an offering made to God, to acknowledge his sovereignty over his creatures, and to expiate sin.

Only five sorts of creatures were appointed to be offered in sacrifice, which were oxen, lambs, goats, turtles, and young doves, all which were to be males and without blemish.

He who presented an offering did it at the altar, and laid his two hands on the head of the creature, and then the throat of it was cut within the first tabernacle. The blood was received in a bason, and with it the Priest sprinkled the vessels and corners of the altar; the rest was spilt at the foot of the altar. The victim was flead, cut in pieces, and laid on the altar, where either the whole or some part of it was burnt, according to the several sorts of sacrifices.

Libations likewise were added to the sacrifices. All the wine, or flour, which were offered with the victim, were called effusion, or pouring out.

There was a separate offering of fine flour and oil, baked on an iron, or in a pan. These were sprinkled with oil and frankincense added to them.

The sacrifices were of four sorts:

1. The burnt-offering, every part of which was consumed by fire on the altar, after washing the feet and entrails.

2, The peace-offering, of which only the inward fat or tallow was burnt on the altar, made up with the liver and kidneys, and the tails of the lambs. The breast and the right shoulder belonged to the Priests, who were obliged to eat them in the holy place; the rest belonged to him who offered the sacrifice.

3. The sacrifice of sin, committed either wilfully or ignorantly; and in this the priest took some of the blood of the victim, dipped his finger in it, and sprinkled seven times towards the veil of the Sanctuary. The same parts of the victim were burnt on the altar in this as in the former sacrifice; the rest, if the sacrifice was offered for the sin of the High-priest, or for the people

ple, was carried without the camp to be burnt there, with the skin, the head, the feet, and the bowels. If it was for a private person, the victim was divided, as was said above, between the priest and the offerer.

4. The sacrifice of Oblation was either fine flour or incense, or cakes of fine flour and oil baked, or the first fruits of new corn. With the things offered there were always oil, salt, wine and frankincense. All the frankincense was cast into the fire; but of the other things offered, the priest took one part, which he also burnt, and the rest belonged to him.

The next principal object of the Jewish worship was their festivals. The first of which was their sabbath, which they kept very strictly, dedicating it wholly to rest, not doing the least servile work on that day.

It began, like all other festivals on one evening, and ended the next. The Passover was likewise a very solemn Festival. It began the evening of the fourteenth day of the March moon. They eat none but unleavened bread for seven days, and the seventh day was another great festival. The first day after the passover they offered new ears of corn, and from that day they reckoned seven full weeks, or fifty days, and that fiftieth day was another solemn festival, called the Harvest Festival; and they offered in thanksgiving two loaves of new wheat as the first fruits of the harvest.

The first day of the seventh month which was the first of the Civil Year, published by sound of trumpet, was also a festival. The tenth of the same month was kept the Feast of Expiation, and that was the day on which the priests went into the Sanctuary. They offered two goats, one of which was a solemn sacrifice for sin.

The High-Priest took the blood of this, and of the lamb killed in the sanctuary and sprinkled them; the other goat was carried not only out of the tabernacle, but without the camp also, and was therefore called *Azazel*, or the scape-goat.

On the fifteenth of the same month began the Feast of Tabernacles, and lasted eight days, being kept as a memorial that the children of Israel had lived in tents. During this feast they lived in huts covered with boughs of trees, and spent those days in mirth, holding boughs in their hands, with which they went round the altar.

Every seventh year was dedicated to rest; for in them they neither sowed nor reaped; but the fiftieth year called *Jubilee*, was most solemn; for then all estates alienated returned to those who had sold them, and slaves recovered their liberty.

The Israelites, in their eating, distinguished between the clean and unclean creatures; it was lawful for them to eat of the first, but not of the last,

There were two qualifications required for the reckoning of a beast clean; which were, that it should have a cloven hoof, and that it should chew the cud; so that it was unlawful for them to eat swine's flesh, because they do not chew the cud; or rabbits and hares, because they have not cloven feet, like the ox, the stag, and sheep, but toes joined by skins. Among fishes, they were allowed to eat such as had fins and scales. All

birds

birds of prey were forbidden them; and it was unlawful for them to eat blood, or the flesh of beasts strangled.

Of uncleanness there were many sorts among the Israelites; not only they who eat of unclean beasts were reckoned unclean, but also those who touched their carcases. Leprosy was reckoned the greatest uncleanness; of the nature and quality of which the priest was to judge, and to separate the lepers from the rest of the people as he thought fit.

There was also a leprosy which clung to cloths and walls, and the garments; after which the moveables and the houses became unclean. The women were unclean after lying in, for forty days if they had a son, and sixty days, if it were a daughter. Of these uncleannesses, some sorts were cleansed by washing their garments and bodies; and others as the last, by offering sacrifice to cleanse them.

The laws relating to matrimony were these. The Israelites were forbidden to marry strange women. One man might have several wives; but the persons among them, with whom it was not allowed to contract matrimony, were the father, the mother, the mother-in-law, the sister by the father or mother's side, the son's or daughter's daughter, the father's wife's daughter, the father or mother's sister, the uncle, the daughter-in-law, the brother's wife, the wife's sister and daughter, or grandson or granddaughter.

However, it was not only lawful, but a command, that the brother should marry the brother's widow, if he died without issue. Adultery and other sins of impurity were severally forbidden by the law. In short, there was a ceremony to try whether women were guilty of adultery. But besides the moral precepts contained in the Decalogue, and more particularly explained in the books of Moses, that holy legislator by God's direction gave them laws for the government of their common-wealth, which were agreeable to reason and equity. It is worthy of observation, that the general laws and customs of the Israelites tended to promote their good, both in a social and individual sense; and that the most enormous crimes were punished in a most extraordinary manner.

After some of these directions for the worship of God, Moses, by the express command of God, appointed Aaron high-priest, and his sons and their offspring to be the priestly race. When they were sanctified, Moses robed them, anointed their heads with oil, and made them offer sacrifice for sin. The function of the priests in general, was to offer sacrifice to the Lord, only the high-priest's was peculiar; for he was allowed to go once a year into the sanctuary on the day of expiation, clad in his priestly garments, to burn incense there before the ark, and sprinkle the blood of the offering seven times with his finger. To the priests were joined all the tribe of Levi, to serve in the tabernacle; to both which were appointed particular allowances for their subsistence. But if any of the priestly race, or of the tribe of Levi, had any bodily imperfections, they were excluded from the function, but

enjoyed the right and privileges of their birth. The obligations they lay under were these: they were to drink no wine or intoxicating liquors when they were to officiate in the tabernacle; they were not to marry a woman that was divorced or had been prostituted; they were not to be at funerals, unless they were of their own fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, and maiden sisters. But now let us return to the historical account.

Eight days after the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Aaron offered his first burnt-offering for himself and the people. This was so acceptable to God, that he gave a miraculous testimony of his approving it by sending fire upon the altar, which consumed the offering in the sight of the people, who in loud shouts and acclamations expressed their joy of God's so signally owning their offering, and in reverence they prostrated themselves on the ground.

The fire thus miraculously kindled, ought to have been kept continually burning; for so the Lord had expressly (*a*) commanded. But Nadab and Abihu, two unhappy sons of Aaron, forgetful of their duty, took their censers, and putting (*b*) common fire in them, laid incense thereon, and offered (*c*) strange fire before the Lord. So flagrant an insult was severely punished by a righteous and tremendous God, for a suffocating flame darted through their insides, and stifled them, without destroying their bodies or garments.

In order to excite in the rest of the priestly order an awe of the Divine Majesty, and deter them from disobedience to the command of heaven, Moses ordered them to bring the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu from before the sanctuary, and carry them out of the camp in the same condition they found them. He likewise charged Aaron and his sons not to mourn for Nadab and Abihu, in shaving their heads or rending their clothes; but that they should leave those marks of mourning to the rest of the people, from whom they ought to distinguish themselves in this, as well as in other points, in reverence to that holy anointing, whereby they had been consecrated to the Lord and separated from the rest of their brethren. A good instruction and warning to

(*a*) *Commanded.* See *Levit.* vi. *v.* 12, 13. This Fire which, *Levit.* ix. *v.* 24. is said to have come from Heaven, and to have consumed the first *burnt-offering*, lasted till the captivity of *Babylon*.

(*b*) *Common.* There were two sorts of fire used in the Tabernacle; the Holy Fire which came from Heaven, and which God had commanded to be kept always burning for the use of the altar of *burnt-offering*; and the common, or profane fire, which was used to boil the flesh of the *peace-offering*, and *sacrifice for sin*.

(*c*) *Strange Fire.* Whether these sons of Aaron had too far indulged themselves in the use of wine, or other strong liquors which might have made them forgetful of their duty, doth not plainly appear from the text, *Levit.* x. 1. Yet some Jewish Doctors affirm it; and from the context, *ib. v.* 9, there is some reason to suspect it, because as soon as they were carried out, God charged Aaron and his sons, on pain of death, *Not to drink wine or strong drink*, when they were to go into the Tabernacle of the congregation; telling them, *It shall be a statute to them throughout all generations.* And he assigns there the reasons of this so strict prohibition. *That ye may put a difference between the Holy and Unholy, and between the Clean and Unclean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken to them by Moses.*

others

others to beware of murmuring or extreme sorrowing, when the hand of God should visit in judgment.

The next historical matter is another awful proof of the danger of incurring the displeasure of the Almighty, exemplified in the case of one whose mother's name was *Shelomith*, an Israelitish woman of the tribe of Dan; but his father was an Egyptian, and supposed to be a proselyte to Israel.

This young man going out of his tent, quarrelled with a man of Israel, and fighting, the son of Shelomith was worsted. Being enraged at this disgrace, and retaining, as may be supposed too much of his father's principles, he fell a cursing and blaspheming the name of the Lord. For this he was immediately apprehended, and brought before Moses, who committed him to custody till the mind of the Lord should be known concerning him; for, though the third commandment in the Decalogue forbids the taking of God's name in vain, yet, this blasphemous cursing being an offense of a higher nature, against which no positive law was yet provided, Moses had recourse to the Lord for counsel and direction therein, who determined thus, *Bring forth him that hath curſed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his (d) head, and let all the congregation ſtone him.*

Moses, in obedience to the divine command, ordered the sentence to be put in execution accordingly; and a law was thereupon made, That whosoever should from that time blaspheme the name of the Lord, whether he were an Israelite or a stranger, he should be stoned to death.

During the time of the Israelites encampment in the wilderness of *Sinai*, the Lord appointed Moses to take Aaron, and with him a principal man of every tribe, whom the Lord pitched upon by name, and make a general muster of the men fit to bear arms. Moses therefore with Aaron and their assistants, having taken an exact account by poll, of all the males from twenty years old and upwards, that were able to go forth to war in Israel, found the number to be (e) six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men, besides the Levites.

God had expressly exempted the tribe of Levi out of this muster, because he had designed them to the

(d) *Head.* This way of laying hands on the heads of criminals may seem to arise from several causes. 1. That they were witnesses of the fact, and that the person condemned suffered justly; protesting, that if he were innocent they desired his blood might fall on their own heads. 2. They put their hands on the head of the criminal in token of an expiatory sacrifice; for idolatry, blasphemy, and such grievous crimes, if they were not punished, they expected would attract a guilt, not only on the witness but the whole nation, which by the death of a criminal, as by a victim, might be expiated. 3. That the criminal was the just cause of his own death.

(e) *Six, &c.* By this we may see how much this people were increased in number in about a year's time, and notwithstanding they had been in a travelling condition, and engaged in battle with the Amalekites, had lost about three thousand men upon the account of their Calf. For they were computed to be but about six hundred thousand men, including the tribe of Levi with them, when they came out of Egypt. And now they were 633,550 men, besides the tribe of Levi, which, being numbered by itself, yielded 22,000 males of a month old and upwards.

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peculiar service of the tabernacle; not only to take charge thereof, and of all the vessels belonging to it, but to take it down upon every remove, and carry both the tabernacle, and the vessels, and set it up when they pitched again.

Being thus mustered, Moses and Aaron, by the express command of God, ordered the incampment of this great body of people in this manner: they were disposed into four battalions, each under one general standard, which were so placed that they inclosed the tabernacle.

The standard of the camp of Judah was first, which consisted of the tribes of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, the sons of Leah, pitched over-against the tabernacle, on the east side of it, towards the rising of the sun.

On the south-side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, under which were the tribes of Reuben and Simeon, the sons of Leah likewise, and of Gad the son of Zilpah her maid.

On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were the tribes of (*f*) Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

And on the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan, under which were the tribes of Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, and of Asher the son of Zilpah.

(*g*) Between the four great (*h*) camps and the tabernacle were pitched four less camps, consisting of the priests and Levites, near to the tabernacle, in and about which their service lay.

On the east side encamped Moses and Aaron, with Aaron's sons, who had the charge of the sanctuary.

On the south side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites descended from Kohath the second son of Levi.

On the west side, behind the tabernacle, stood the Gershonites, another part of the Levites, descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son.

And on the the north were planted the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who sprung from *Merari*, Levi's youngest son.

This was the order of their encamping. The manner of their dislodging,

(*f*) *Ephraim.* Ephraim and Manasseh supplied the place of Joseph their father; and therefore they are taken to be Rachel's children, and so they and Benjamin make the third standard.

(*g*) *Between.* Josephus in *Antiq.* l. 3. *c.* 11. tells us, That between each tribe, in every one of these four quarters, there were distant spaces, like streets, where they bought and sold as in a market, and tradesmen in their shops, in manner of a city leading to and fro. This camp is thought to be round, a mile distant from the tabernacle, that is, a sabbath-day's journey, where the distance between the people and the ark is commanded to be two thousand cubits.

(*h*) *Camps.* Each of these camps had its several banner or standard, and each standard its motto or inscription. Each standard likewise had a distinct sign written on it: Reuben's standard had the image of a man, Judah's of a lion, Ephraim's of an ox, and Dan's that of an eagle. These same four creatures are used by *Ezekiel* to describe the nature of angels. Every Cherubim is said to have four faces; the face of a man, to shew his understanding; of a lion to shew his power; of an ox, to shew his ministratory office; of an eagle, to shew his swiftness in the execution of God's will. By the same four, in the opinion of many of the fathers, are shadowed the four Evangelists: The Man shadoweth St. *Matthew*, because he begins his Gospel with the generation of Christ, according to his humanity; the Lion, St. *Mark*, because he begins the Gospel from that voice of the Lion roaring in the wilderness; the Ox, St. *Luke*, because he begins with *Zacharias* the Priest; and the Eagle, St. *John*, who, soaring aloft, beginneth with the divinity of Christ.

and

and marching was thus: when they were to remove (which was when the cloud was taken off the tabernacle) the trumpet was sounded, and upon the first alarm the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it set forward. Then the tabernacle being taken down, the Gershonites and the Merarites attended the waggons, with the boards and staves of it. When these were on their march, a second alarm was sounded; upon which the standard of Reuben's camp advanced with the tribes under it.

After them followed the Kohathites, bearing the sanctuary, which being more holy, and less cumbersome than the heavy boards and pillars of the tabernacle, was not put into a waggon, but carried on their shoulders.

Next followed the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the three tribes belonging to it. And last of all, the other three tribes under the standard of Dan brought up the rear.

(*i*) Having remained a considerable time before the mount of the Lord, the Israelites decamped by God's command on the first day of the second month, the second year after their coming out of Egypt. In their march the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting place for them: at the setting forward of which Moses said, *Rise Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.* And when the ark rested again, he added, *return Lord unto the many thousands of* Israel. Having marched three days into the wilderness, they came to a place called, *The Graves of Lust*, from what happened to the Israelites there. Murmuring against the Lord, and complaining of the weariness of their journey, he was so incensed against them, that he sent down fire, and destroyed those that were in the extream parts of the camp. Frighted at this judgment, they repaired to Moses, upon whose intercession the fire was quenched, and the name of that place called *Taberah*, which signifies burning. This exertion of divine power, instead of terrifying them into their duty, did but increase their murmuring. For being come to new quarters they expected change of diet; and because God did not pre-

(*i*) *Having*, &c. Designing in the text to keep chiefly to the historical part of the sacred Writ, and to preserve the connection of matter of fact, with which the preceptive would interfere, I thought it more useful for the reader to continue the series of the story in the text, and put the intervening precepts and orders here in the notes. In the third and fourth chapters of *Numbers*, therefore, we have the Lord's taking the Levites to himself in exchange for the first-born, with the reason for his so doing; likewise his giving the Levites to the Priests for the service of the tabernacle, distributing them into three classes or orders, and appointing them their several services. Afterwards, in *chap.* v. follows that clear and excellent type of Gospel purity, and Christian church discipline, expressed in commanding the children of Israel to put out of the camp every leper, and every one that had a running issue, and whosoever was defiled with the dead, both male and female; that they might not defile their camps in the midst of which the Lord dwelled. In the sixth chapter followed divers laws relating to restitution in cases of trespass and to the trial of jealousy between men and their wives; to the vow of Nazarites, to which is subjoined the form of that divine blessing, which the Lord himself did dictate for the priests to pronounce upon the people. The seventh chapter contains the offerings of the princes at the dedication of both the tabernacle and the altar, &c. The consecration and purification of the Levites are set down in the eighth. A reinforcement of the passover, and the guiding of the Israelites by the cloud in the ninth chapter.

sently gratify them, they in contempt preferred the rank food of Egypt, onions, leeks, and garlick, to the delicious heavenly dainties with which God had daily fed them. Moses had often heard their murmuring, and patiently borne with them; but now that they were grown so numerous, and the greatness of their numbers, demanding still more care and vigilance to govern and provide for them, the sense of the weight so great a charge occasioned, gave mush uneasiness to Moses, who in his address to God, complained of the heavy burden which the care of so numerous and mutinous a people brought upon him.

The Almighty no sooner heard the complaint of his faithful servant, than he relieved him from his cares, bidding him chuse seventy men of the elders of Israel, and bring them with him to the tabernacle of the congregation. *And there,* said the Lord, *I will come down and talk with thee; and I will endue thee with the same spirit with which I have inspired thee, and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee.* Moses accordingly brought the seventy elders of the children of Israel before the Lord, who kept his word with him; for being inspired, they straightway prophesied. Nay, this inspiration was so extensive, that two of these seventy, though they came not out with the rest to the tabernacle, but remained behind in the camp, were taken in among the rest, and received the same impression of the spirit, and prophesied as the others did. This so surprised a certain young man, that he ran from the camp to the tabernacle to acquaint Moses that *Eldad* and *Medad,* for so they were named, were prophesying in the camp.

Joshua, who as yet was not acquainted with the operations of the Lord by his spirit, over-hearing this message, and thinking it some derogation from his master, that they should prophesy, and not follow him, advised Moses to forbid them. But Moses, reproving him gently for his rashness cry'd, *Dost thou envy them upon my account? Would to God that all the Lord's people were inspired, and that they might prophesy.*

Amidst divers complaints of Moses to God of his incapacity, to sustain the heavy weight of so great a charge as the direction of so numerous a people, he expostulated with the Lord on the impossibility of their being supplied with flesh in that place, because they were so numerous. The Lord knowing the great fatigue Moses had gone through in the conduct of this people, bore with him, and only gave him this gentle rebuke: *Is the Lord's hand shortened? Thou shalt see whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.*

Accordingly, when Moses with the elders were gone back to the camp, and had acquainted the people with it, a south wind arose, and drove vast numbers of (*k*) Quails from the sea-coast within a mile of the camp, where they lay about a yard thick up-

(*k*) *Quails.* These birds must be supposed to come from the *Abraian* or Red Sea; and as *Para* and *Kibroth-Hattaavah* were north and north-east of the Red Sea, it must be a southerly wind. That these Quails came from the Red Sea is the opinion of Josephus, Pliny, and several others, who affirm them to breed on the coasts there.

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on the ground. The people fell greedily to gathering the quails, which they (still mistrusting God's providence, which had hitherto never failed them) did in such great quantities, as if they were to have no more.

But God soon called them to a dreadful account for their insolent demand of flesh, and doubtful mistrust of his power; For, while they were regaling themselves with these dainties, God visited them with a very severe (*l*) Plague whereof many died, and were buried in the place, which, from their lusting after flesh, was called *Kibroth-Hattaavah*, which signifies the graves of lust or concupiscence.

CHAP.

(*l*) *Plague.* It probably seems to have been a suffocating distemper, like the quinsey, which choaked them as they were eating, or soon after; for the words are very express, *While the meat was in their mouth, the wrath of God fell upon them.* This is further confirmed by *Psalm* lxxviii. *v.* 30, 31.

CHAP. VII.

AARON AND HIS SISTER MIRIAM ENVIOUSLY SEEK TO RAISE A SEDITION; THE LATTER IS PUNISHED WITH LEPROSY, AND HAVING BEEN MADE A GENERAL EXAMPLE TO THE PEOPLE IS HEALED. APPOINTMENT OF THE SPIES, WITH THEIR PARTICULAR ACTS. THE PEOPLE ARE THREATENED FOR MURMURING AT THEM. GOD AVERTS THE JUDGMENT, BUT PUNISHES THOSE WHO SPREAD A FALSE REPORT. SABBATH BREAKING PUNISHED WITH DEATH. THE REBELLION AND PUNISHMENT OF KORAH. THE PLAGUE APPEASED.

FROM hence they took their journey to *Hazeroth*, which signifies palaces. And here another unhappy accident befel them: Aaron and his sister Miriam observing the great power of Moses their brother with the people, and that God chiefly made use of him in the delivery of his sacred oracles to them, began to envy him: to give some colour to their quarrel, they pretended to fall out with him upon the account of his marrying a foreigner, calling her (*a*) *Ethiopian*, and emulating Moses's great gifts and authority, they added, *What, hath the Lord spoken only by* Moses? *Hath he not spoken also by us?*

(*a*) *Ethiopian.* Zipporah, Moses's wife, was a Midianite; and because Midian bordered on Ethiopia, she was so called, and it is sometimes in holy scripture comprehended under this name. But here Zipporah is called Ethiopian in ridicule and spight; which they ought not to have done, for she having submitted to the law, ought to have been reckoned an Israelite, as Ruth and Rahab were.

Moses

Moses saw their discontent; and though he was naturally of a meek disposition, and could pardon an injury offered to himself, his righteous soul was grieved and incensed, when mortals dared to insult the Majesty of Heaven; but looking on this as personal pique, he would not take notice of it.

However, God, who was more immediately concerned in this, resolved to vindicate himself and his faithful servant; for on a sudden calling for Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, at the door of the tabernacle he sharply reprehended them for their insolence, asking them, how they durst speak against his servant Moses? (b) *You share*, said he, *the great prophetick office indeed, and to you I have declared my will in dreams and visions; but with* Moses *I have conversed more familiarly, and I will speak face to face with him, and shew him as much of my glory as he is capable of seeing.*

Upon this the Lord withdrew in great displeasure from them. Moses had the comfort of seeing himself justified: but Aaron, to his great confusion, saw his sister Miriam made a dreadful example of God's anger; for on a sudden she became a loathful deformed leper; and well knowing he deserved to share in this curse for his ungrateful murmuring, presently addressed himself to Moses, acknowledged their sin, begged pardon, and intercedes for his sister, that she might be restored to her health.

Good Moses, who was never wanting in charity even to his enemies, melted into pity, and complied with his request. But yet, to terrify others from moving sedition again, and because the offence was publick, God resolved to make an example of Miriam in her cure, and therefore he commanded Moses to turn her out of the camp, as a common leper, for seven days, and then to receive her again.

Miriam being returned to the camp, the Israelites removed to the desart of Paran; from whence after several incampments, they came to Kadesh-Barnea, on the frontiers of Canaan.

Here Moses let them know that they were come near the promised land; and for their satisfaction, God commanded Moses to send twelve men, one of each tribe, to take a view of the country. He charged them to go up to the hills to observe whether the country was strong or weak; whether there were many inhabitants; how their towns were situated, and whether fortified; whether the soil was fertile or barren; whether it was planted with trees or not; what fruit they bore, and to bring some of it; for then was the time when the first grapes were ripe, that was, in July.

With these instructions the twelve spies set forward; and having taken a view of the country from north to south, in their return, they passed through a fertile valley which abounded in vines, where they cut down a branch with but one cluster of grapes on it, but that of so vast a weight and bigness, that they were forced

(b) *You.* Miriam is called a prophetess.

to

to carry it upon a staff between two.

Nor was this the only product of this happy soil; the golden fig, and beautiful pomegranate, adorned the trees, and variety of fruits loaded the luxuriant branches. Of each of these they took a sample; and upon their leaving the place, from the great plenty of grapes, they called it the valley of *Eſchol*, which signifies a cluster of grapes.

Having spent forty days in viewing and observing the country, they returned to the camp of Israel and Kadesh; and having shewed the fruits of the land to Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation, they related the observations they had made in their journey, and said, *We have been in the country to which you have ſent us. It is a fertile and plentiful land; but the inhabitants of it are powerful. There are great cities with ſtrong walls. We have ſeen there, men of the race of* Anak, *warlike men, and of a gigantick ſtature. The* Amalekites *inhabit the ſouth part of the land; the* Hittites, Jebusites, *and* Amorites, *on the mountains; and the* Canaanites, *on the ſea-coaſts, and the river* Jordan.

Such a relation could not but terrify a people possessed with suspicions and discontent; and they soon discovered their fear. But *Caleb*, one of those that were sent to discover the country, to pacify them, said, *Let us make ourſelves maſters of the country, for we are ſtrong enough to conquer thoſe people.*

But the mutineers declared against engaging in a war, wishing they were in Egypt again; and choosing rather to die in the wilderness, than to fall by the sword, and have their wives and children enslaved. In short, they proposed to choose themselves a chief and return to Egypt.

This so deeply affected Moses, that notwithstanding they were so obstinately bent upon their own ruin, he and Aaron, in the presence of the assembly, fell on their faces to deprecate the vengeance which they feared God would let fly at these rebellious mutineers. Whilst Caleb and Joshua through excess of sorrow for the people's blasphemy, rending their cloaths, boldly stood up, and endeavoured to persuade them that they might, by God's help, overcome the inhabitants of that country; they said, *The land that we paſſed through is indeed a rich and fertile land, abounding with all things neceſſary for life. If we pleaſe the Lord, he will bring us into this land, and give it us.*

Do not therefore, by rebelling againſt him, forfeit his promiſe and protection. Nor be afraid of the people of the land, whom we ſhall as ſurely conquer as we eat our food, and as eaſily; for their God hath withdrawn his care of them; and if the Lord continue it to you, ye have nothing to fear.

This speech made so little impression upon them, that in a tumultous manner, they called out to stone them; and which they had probably done, had not God miraculously interposed, by sending his Glory, which visibly appeared at that instant in the

tabernacle of the congregation before them all.

While the people were thus contemning the power of the Most High, Moses and Aaron at humble distance prostrated themselves before the Lord, and God being highly incensed with this insolence of the Israelites, told Moses he would send the plague that should extirpate this people, and would make him a prince of a more numerous and powerful nation. But good Moses, as he had before done, preferred the interest of an unworthy people, and the honour of God, to all selfish views, representing to the Lord, that if he destroyed the Israelites, the Egyptians, and other nations thereabout, who saw he had taken them into his protection, would not fail to say he was not able to carry them into the land he had promised them. Then imploring God's mercy, and with repeated and importunate intreaties begging pardon for the people, God at length suffered himself to be prevailed on, and to satisfy Moses, he pronounced them pardoned; but it was with this restriction; for reproaching them with their ingratitude, who had so often and wonderfully tasted of his bounty in providing against their wants, screening them from their enemies, and preserving them in all dangers; since they had so often provoked him with their disobedience, he declared that not one of those who had murmured should enter into the promised land, except Caleb and Joshua; and they should wander about there with their children for the space of forty years. And though God at the pressing intreaty of Moses did reverse the sentence of sudden death upon the whole congregation of murmurers, yet the ten false spies, the immediate authors of the rebellion, who brought an evil report upon the good land, were punished with death, by the plague.

But Caleb and Joshua, who had done their duty, in giving a faithful account of their observations, were not only preserved, but commended of God, who gave them his promise that they should live to enter, and take possession of the good land.

On the first report of these things, the children of Israel are said to have mourned greatly. But by their actions it doth not appear they were any better disposed; for changing their minds on a sudden, from a cowardly fearfulness, to a presumptious rashness, the next morning they declared, *We are ready to go to the place whereof the Lord hath ſpoken to us.*

But this was undertaken in their rebellious, obstinate temper, and was adding sin to sin. Nor was Moses ignorant of it; for he endeavoured to restrain them, and expostulated with them on the danger, telling them their enterprize was against the express command of God, that it would not prosper, and forbid them going upon pain of being defeated and slain, assuring them, that God had left them, and that the Amalekites and Canaanites had gained the passes in the mountains before them.

These admonitions had no weight with those obstinate people. They presumptuously supposed the boldness of the attempt would wipe off their

their former cowardice, and reinstate them in God's favour; and though the ark of the Lord, which was to go before the host, went not with them, nor Moses their general at the head of them, yet they resolutely marched to the top of the hills, where the enemy surprised, defeated, and slew many of them, and pursued the rest as far as Horma.

After this, though it was but eleven days journey from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea; yet through their disobedience, they spent near two years in going that eleven days journey. And which is still more strange, turning back from Kadish-Barnea; and being near the confines of the promised land, they were eight and thirty years more wandering in the wilderness before they could come to the borders of the promised land again.

Moses having led them back into the desert, toward the Red-Sea, they continued thereabout, making in the aforesaid time, eighteen several removes or dislodgments, and at last they returned to Kadish-Barnea, near the place from whence they came.

Many circumstances worthy of notice happened to the Israelites during their continuance in the wilderness.

The first of which is of a man, who by a post-fact law, was adjudged to be stoned to death for violating the sabbath, by gathering sticks on that day, the celebration of which God hath strictly enjoined, though there was no penalty annexed to the breach of it, those who brought the offender before Moses, he knew would determine justly; and committed the man to safe custody, Moses enquired of God what he should do in this case? who immediately, from his heavenly oracle, returned this answer, *That the criminal should be conveyed without the camp and there be stoned to death.* Which was executed accordingly.

The Israelites now increased in wickedness and impiety, and vexed the souls of the few pious among them, the haughty Korah, great grandson to Levi, separated from Moses and Aaron, and having seduced *Dathan* and *Abiram*, sons of *Eliah*, of Reuben's family, and drawn in two hundred and fifty Levites to his party, that were men of fame and interest among the people, he made most grievous complaint against Moses and Aaron, charging them with pride, in usurping upon the liberties of the people, who they said, were as holy as themselves.

Moses on hearing this, (*k*) fell on his face; and soon after rising from that humble posture, he, with great courage and assurance, let them know, that the next day the Lord would decide the controversy, and

(k) *Fell*, &c. This is a phrase often used to express divine adoration and application to God for help; and good reason there is to believe that at this time Moses, who was well acquainted with the gracious and ready assistance of God in time of need, might apply himself to the Lord for protection against this mutinous crew, as apprehending some violence from them, who in this tumultuous manner attacked him. And it is very reasonable to think that, whilst he lay in this humble posture, God appeared to him, and both comforted and advised him; for presently after he spoke to the rebels with great assurance, and to vindicate himself, put the matter between him and them upon trial the next day.

would

would make it appear, who were his servants, and who was holy, and would admit whom he had chosen to come near him,

Then, with his usual calmness and serenity of mind, he argued the matter with them, mildly rebuked their insolence, and told them that they took too much upon themselves.

But in a more particular manner he addressed himself to *Korah*, and the *Levites* that joined him, and said, *Hear me ye ſons of* Levi; *is it a matter of ſo light concern, that the God of* Israel *hath diſtinguiſhed you from the reſt of* Israel, *to admit you to the more immediate ſervice of the tabernacle, and to ſtand before the congregation, and miniſter to them? Is not this an honour ſufficient to ſatisfy your ambitious ſpirit, but that ye muſt aim at the prieſthood too?*

This is the cauſe of your clamours; and for this ye have moved the people to ſedition. But be aſſured, whatever ye may pretend againſt Aaron, *this inſult is againſt the Lord, as it is againſt his diſpenſations, that ye murmur and conſpire.*

Dathan and Abiram stood at a distance, while Moses talked with the rest, and therefore he sent for them to come to him; but they surlily returned for an answer, that they would not come. And to retort his own expressions upon himself, they added, *Is it a matter of ſo ſmall moment, that thou haſt brought us out of a land that flowed with plenty, to kill us in the deſert?*

Thou affecteſt dominion, and wouldſt make thyſelf prince of us alſo. Notwithſtanding thy fair promiſes, thou haſt not brought us into a land that flowed with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards; but when we were ready to take poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, thou haſt turned us back into this barren deſert, to repeat the fatigues and hardſhips, we had before undergone. We will not come.

These unjust reproaches highly provoked Moses, who instead of returning any ill language to them, addressing himself to God, said, *Reſpect not thou their offering; for though they reflect thus unjuſtly upon me, I have not taken ſo much as an aſs from them, neither have I hurt one of them.* Then summoning Korah and all the company to meet him and Aaron before the Lord next day, he ordered them to bring their censers ready prepared with incense in them, and to appear all before the Lord.

Accordingly, on the morrow, they came with great confidence: and having set fire to the incense in their censers, they boldly planted themselves in the door of the tabernacle with Moses and Aaron; and to bid the greater defiance to these holy men, they had persuaded all the congregation to side with them.

This impious and presumptious behaviour so provoked the Almighty, that he resolved to take the matter into his own hand; and darting forth his glory upon the tabernacle, he commanded Moses and Aaron to withdraw, that he might consume the rebels. But the two good men, knowing that the people were drawn into this insolence by the wicked arts of

of Korah, and his party, prostrated themselves before the Lord, and by their prayers interceded for the people; *O God, thou God of the ſpirit of all fleſh*, said they, *ſhall one man ſin; and wilt thou be angry with all?* Their prayers were heard as soon as delivered, and God bid them command the people to withdraw, who frightened with the amazing splendor that broke from the cloud, readily took the warning, and drew off from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who came boldly out, aud stood daring at the doors of their tents, with their wives and families. Then Moses addressing himself to the people, said, *By this you ſhall know that the Lord has commiſſioned me to do what I have done, and that I have undertaken nothing of my own head. If theſe men die the common way of nature, or be viſited as other men, then take it for granted, the Lord hath not ſent me; but if he deal with them after a ſtrange and unuſual manner, and the earth, opening her mouth, ſwallow them up alive, then ſhall ye underſtand that theſe men have provoked the Lord.*

Moses had no sooner spoken these words, but terrible convulsions heaved the labouring earth, the surface of which cleaving asunder, Korah and his faction, with their goods and *(l)* families, were swallowed up alive, and the ground closing upon them they perished.

The rest of the people that stood round them, and saw their dismal fate, being frighted with the loud cries and shrieks of the departing mutineers, fled away for fear the earth should have swallowed them too.

In the mean time God, to compleat his vengeance on the rest of the leaders in this rebellion, who had profanely attempted to offer incense contrary to the law, sent down fire from Heaven, and destroyed the two hundred and fifty men that had joined with Korah. The (*m*) censers, on which they intended to offer, remained amidst the congregation, which God had ordered to be preserved, but not for the same use as formerly, nor in the same form; therefore he commanded Moses to direct Eleazer, Aaron's son, to beat them out into small plates, and fix them on the altar of the burnt-offerings; assigning this reason for it, *That it might be for a memorial to the children of Iſrael, that no ſtranger or any that was not of Aaron's family, ſhould preſume to offer incenſe before the Lord, leſt he died the death of Korah and his company.*

This judgment, severe as it was,

(*l*) *Families.* Except some of Korah's sons. See Numb. xxvi. 11.

(*m*) *Cenſers.* The two hundred and fifty princes had not offered any incense, being prevented by death: however, it may be presumed that they had lighted their incense at the holy fire, by which they obtained (at least in the opinion of the people) a sort of consecration. The Lord therefore, to keep up among them the reputation and esteem of things devoted, would not have them put to profane uses: and to make a difference between his own institutions and men's contrivances (especially those wicked men) he ordered all those brazen censers to be wrought into broad plates, and to cover the altar with them; to the intent that these brazen plates being polished bright might by their lustre put the people in mind of the offence of those that were once the owners of them; and by seeing them often (as they must do every time they looked upon the altar) they might be warned of the same crime.

had no other effect on the Israelites than the former, for the next day they took occasion to mutiny afresh, murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and charging them with the murder of so many persons. They well knowing the unruly nature of this obstinate people, and fearing to what degree of madness and violence they might have proceeded, took (*n*) sanctuary in the tabernacle; where as soon as they entered, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared, which was a sure token that the Lord had something to say to them.

Immediately God called to Moses and Aaron, and bid them be gone from the rest of the congregation; for he would consume them in a moment. They thereupon fell down, as they used to do on such occasions, to intercede for the people; but, as early as they were in supplicating, vengeance was before them; for the Lord, provoked by their repeated rebellions, had already sent a (*o*) plague among them. Which Moses perceiving, bid Aaron take a censer, and put fire in it from the Altar, and incense; and hasten to the congregation to make an atonement for them. Aaron did as Moses directed him, and standing between the dead and the living, he prayed for the people, and the plague ceased.

However, in that short space of time that the plague raged amongst them, there died fourteen thousand, seven hundred men, without reckoning those who perished in the sedition with Korah and his company.

CHAP. III.

GOD CAUSES AARON'S ROD TO BUD, AND TO BE LEFT AS A MONUMENT TO THE PEOPLE, IN ORDER TO PREVENT THEIR FUTURE MURMURING. MOSES SUPPLIES THE PEOPLE WITH WATER OUT OF THE ROCK. DEATH OF AARON. THE PLAGUE OF FIERY SERPENTS. REMEDIED BY LOOKING UP TO THE BRAZEN ONE SET UP BY MOSES. THE ISRAELITES OBTAIN VICTORY OVER SEVERAL PRINCES, WHO ENDEAVOUR TO OPPOSE THEIR MARCH.

GOD having in so dreadful a manner declared against those who opposed the government of Moses, and the priesthood of Aaron, to end all contests and disputes among the ambitious and aspiring, resolved by a convincing miracle to put an end to the controversy, and establish and confirm the priesthood in the family in which he had placed it.

In order to this, he commanded Moses to take a rod from each tribe, and to write upon it the name of the prince of that tribe to which it belonged; and on the rod of the tribe of Levi to write Aaron's name; which when he had done, he was to lay up these twelve rods in the tabernacle,

(*n*) *Sanctuary.* This shews to whom we ought to fly in any persecution or distress; and that God is our only refuge and protection. Whence the great fruit and advantage of persecution appears, that it compels us to apply to him.

(*o*) *Plague.* Plague is a comprehensive term, as we see in the plagues of Egypt, which are all called plagues, though they were all different from each other. We may reasonably think that it was the pestilence or infectious sickness.

before

before the ark of the testimony, where God was to declare his will farther to them. And to let them know that God would determine the controversy, and put an end to their murmurings, he would cause the rod of that man to blossom whom he would choose.

Moses, who never failed immediate compliance with the divine command, took a rod from the prince of each tribe, wrote his name upon it, and laid up all the rods together in the tabernacle. And the next day he went in and brought forth all the rods; and in the presence of all the people he gave each man his rod, which they found to be the same as they had delivered to Moses over night, except Aaron's, which had not only budded, but blossomed, and bore ripe almonds. This was a convincing proof, that God had singled out Aaron to the priestly office.

To preserve the memory therefore of the determination of this controversy, the Lord bade Moses bring Aaron's rod back again, and lay it before the ark of the tabernacle, to be kept for a memorial of their rebellion; and that seeing it they might forbear to murmur; and so prevent sudden death.

These obstinate people now began to be sensible of the justice of their punishment; and since God in his own house visited them for their sins, they enumerated the (*p*) several ways they had been punished.

Behold, said they, we die; we perish; we are all lost; and because God had in the tabernacle expressed his displeasure more than once in punishing them in an exemplary manner, they cried out, If we approach the tabernacle we die; not considering that their own iniquities drew the justice of God upon them in this place, for which he had ordered the altar to be covered with (*q*) remarkable shining brass, to put them in mind of their obedience.

(*r*) The next historical matter we meet with is the Israelites being at Kadesh; where Miriam (who was sister to Aaron and Moses, and (*s*) elder than both) died, and was buried there. In this place the Israelites, impatient of any inconveniency, for want of water, began (as usually) to exclaim against Moses and Aaron, saying, *Why have ye brought the Lord's peo-*

(*p*) *Several.* The Chaldee text describes their murmuring thus: We die by the sword; as in the case of their daring to enter the promised land contrary to Moses's advice, when they were slain by the Canaanites and Amalekites. The earth swallowed us up as in the case of Korah and his associates. The pestilence doth consume us; as in the case of the 1470 that died of it.

(*q*) *Remarkable.* As being made of two brazen censers, which belonged to the two hundred princes that had joined with Korah.

(*r*) *The next, &c.* The history breaks off at the seventeenth chapter of Numbers, and begins not till the twentieth.

By the omission of these matters in the two chapters, we miss the account how the Israelites came to *Kadesh* again in the wilderness of *Zin*; only Moses briefly reciting some of their faults, tells us, That after they had been beaten by the Amalekites and Canaanites, they turned and took their way in the wilderness along the Red Sea, as God had commanded Moses, and compassed mount Seir many days; (which both Tremellius and our Bible in their notes reckon eight and thirty years) till at length the Lord said, *Ye have compassed this mountain long enough turn ye northward.*

(*s*) *Elder.* That she was elder than Moses appears from *Exod.* ii. 4, where she is said to be left to watch him when he was exposed in the Ark of Rushes.

ple

ple into the Wilderneſs to kill them and their cattle? Why did you perſuade us to leave the fertile land of Egypt to bring us into this barren place, which affords neither water to quench our thirſt, nor fruits to ſatisfy our hunger? Would to God we had periſhed with our brethren before the Lord.

The ſervants of God, according to their uſual cuſtom addreſſed themſelves to God for help; who bade Moſes take the rod, and that he and Aaron ſhould aſſemble the people; and then, ſaid the Lord, *Speak ye to the rock in their ſight, and it ſhall yield water for them.*

Moſes hereupon taking the (*t*) rod from before the Lord went, and with Aaron's aſſiſtance aſſembled the people together before the Lord. Moſes hitherto had paid an exact and abſolute obedience to all the commands God had enjoined him; but now, in deviating from his inſtructions, though ſeemingly but a little, he committed the greateſt miſcarriage of his whole life; for he was bid to ſpeak to the rock before the people; but inſtead of doing it, he ſpeaks to the people, ſaying, *Hear now, ye rebels! muſt we fetch water for you out of the rock?* In which he not only expreſſed impatience and heat of ſpirit, but incredulity, making a doubt of what God had poſitively promiſed.

It is certain he diſobeyed God in this, for he (*u*) ſmote the rock twice with the rod, and immediately there iſſued out water in great plenty; by which we may ſee, God would not loſe the honour of his miracle for his ſervant's fault, but cauſed the water to flow from the rock. But to ſhew he expected an entire obedience to his commands, though Moſes had been his faithful ſervant in performing all his inſtructions before; yet now, for the breach of his diſobedience, he denounces to Moſes and Aaron (who was in the ſame tranſgreſſion with him) their doom in theſe words; *Becauſe ye believed me not, to (w) ſanctify me in the ſight of the children of Iſrael, therefore you ſhall not have the honour of (x) leading the people into the land which I have given them.* From this unhappy accident, the place was called *Meribath*, which ſignifies, The water of contradiction.

Moſes patiently received the divine chaſtiſement, but continued in his

(*t*) *Rod.* The text does not expreſſly tell us whether of the rods this was; that with which he did ſo many miracles in Egypt formerly, or that by which they were ſo lately reclaimed from a rebellion: It ſeems moſt likely to be the latter; becauſe it is called *the rod from before the Lord*, and which yet bore a miracle upon it, the buds and almonds.

(*u*) *Smote.* If it ſhould be alledged in favour of Moſes, That when he was ſent to the rock before, he was bid to take his rod in his hand and ſmite the rock, that the water might come forth; and that from thence he might infer, he was alſo now to ſmite the rock with his rod: It may be ſaid, That as he then followed his inſtruction, ſo he was to have done here. He ſmote the rock then, becauſe he was bid; but he did not ſpeak to it, becauſe he was not bid. So now he ſhould have ſpoken to it becauſe he was bid; and not have ſmitten it, becauſe he was not bid.

(*w*) *Sanctify.* That is you ſhould ſhew them that I am holy, omnipotent merciful and true; and that I can and will perform my promiſe to this ungrateful and wicked people, as ye know and ought to remember I have often done.

(*x*) This was a ſore mortification to Moſes not to ſee the promiſed Canaan, being thereby fruſtrated of the fruit of his long and troubleſome conduct. By which we ought to learn to die to the world and ourſelves, and live only to God.

command

command and care of the people, and intending to decamp, that he might secure their march from Kadesh, he sent an embassy to the King of Edom, (upon whose borders they now were) to inform him of the travels of the Israelites desiring leave to pass thro' his country, on account that they were both descended from Isaac and Rebecca; assuring him that they would commit no acts of hostility, nor trespass in his fields or vineyards, nor so much as drink of his water, without paying for it, but only travel on the king's highway. The inhospitable Edomite not only refused them passage, but with a potent army came out to defend his frontiers; and oppose the Israelites, should they attempt to pass.

They therefore turned another way, and marching from Kadesh came to mount Hor, near the borders of Edom. And now the time drawing near, that the children of Israel were to enter the promised land, into which the Lord had told Aaron he should not enter, because of his transgression at Meribah, God gave Aaron notice of his approaching death, and commanded Moses to take Aaron and Eleazar, his son, who was to succeed him in the office of high-priest, to the mount, there to strip Aaron of his priestly garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; which when Moses had done, Aaron died on the top of mount Hor, being a hundred twenty and three years old. and when the people saw that Aaron was dead, they bewailed him thirty days.

It was the beginning of the fifth month of the fortieth year of their travels from Egypt, when they were upon the borders of Canaan, and Arad one of the kings of Canaan that dwelt in the south, hearing which way they came, went out and sought them and took some of them prisoners. This defeat brought them to a sense of their duty; and knowing they were now upon the borders of the promised land, they made a vow to the Lord, promising that if he would deliver this people into their hands, they would utterly destroy their cities. God took them at their word, and gave them such success, that at (*y*) Horman they engaged these Canaanites, and defeated them, took their cities, and utterly destroyed them.

Elated with this success, they dislodged from Mount Hor, and took their way by the Red Sea, marching round Edom, through which they had been denied passage, and forbidden to force their way. And because the way was long, the passes uneasy, and the country barren; they, forgetting their late success, and reflecting only on the present discouragements, relapsed into their old humour of murmuring, complaining directly against God and Moses; *wherefore*, say they, *have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderneſs, where there is neither meat nor drink, but this* (*z*) *Manna, which our ſtomachs*

(*y*) *Horman.* This seems to be the same place to which the Amalekites had beaten and chased the Israelites about eight and thirty years before.

(*z*) *Manna.* This is the same complaint which they made before.

loathe? To punish this repeated instance of impiety and distrust of his care, God sent (*a*) fiery serpents among them, which destroyed a great number of these rebels. This punishment brought the rest to their senses, who, flying to injured Moses, acknowledged their guilt, and cried for mercy: Moses, though he had lately incurred the displeasure of the Lord on their account, in pity to their distress, addressed himself in prayer to God for them; who did not immediately take away the serpents, but leaving them to be a farther scourge, and make them more sensible of their transgression, provided a remedy to prevent their death, and heal their hurts: For he ordered Moses to make a (*b*) serpent of a fiery colour, and to set it up on a high pole, that the people who were bitten by the fiery serpents, might by looking up to it be recovered.

Moses accordingly made the form of a serpent in brass, and set it up as a banner; and whoever afterwards was bitten by a serpent, if he looked upon that brazen serpent, recovered.

The Israelites at this time were at Phanon, whither they were come from Salmona, their first camp, after they removed from about Mount Hor. From Phanon, they went and encamped at Oboth, and thence to Jiearbarim, in the desert that is before Moab to the eastward.

Decamping from thence they came to Zared, and afterwards encamped by the river of Arnon, which is in the desert, and runs to the frontiers of the Amorites; for it divides them from the Moabites. They held on their march, and at length came into the plains of Moab, on the banks of Jordan, opposite to Jericho, to the top of Pisgah.

From hence Moses sent ambassadors to *Sihon* king of the Amorites, to demand a passage through his country, promising not to break into the fields or vineyards, nor to drink of the water, but only to march along the highway till they were past his country. The Amorite prince, fearing to admit so formidable a body into the heart of his kingdom, positively denied them passage: And, thinking it better policy to attack than be attacked, gathering what force he could, marched out to give them battle at Jahaz, where Israel routed him, and seized his country. They likewise took Heshbon, and the villages about it, which Sihon had before taken from the Moabites; and being thus possessed of the Amorites land, they dwelt there.

After this, Moses sent out forces to discover Jazar, another city of the Amorites, which they took with all its territories, and drove out the people that dwelt there. Then turning another way, they marched towards Ba-

(*a*) *Fiery.* These serpents were not so by nature, but by the effect of their biting, which caused a great inflammation or burning in all those that were bitten by them.

(*b*) *Serpent.* This brazen serpent (a significant type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being lifted up as an *enfign for the nations*, gives life and salvation to all them, that in true faith look upon him) remained among the Jews above 700 years, to the time of Hezekiah king of Judah; who in a holy zeal, pursuant to God's command, removing the high places, breaking the images, and cutting down the groves, broke also in pieces this *brazen ſerpent* among the rest.

shan, where the (*c*) giant Og, another Amorite king, reigned.

This powerful prince, with his gigantic troops, drew out to give the Israelites battle; but lest they should be discouraged at the sight of this formidable army, who exceeded the common size of nature, Moses by the command of God bade them fear nothing, for he had delivered them into their hands, and they should make as easy a conquest over them as they did over Sihon, king of the Amorites.

Israel thus encouraged joined battle, and slew king Og and his sons, and all his people. They also took all his cities threescore in number, all fenced with high walls, gates and bars. besides open towns and villages a great number; destroying utterly the inhabitants, but keeping all the cattle and the spoil of those cities for a prey to themselves, as they had done before in the (*d*) case of Sihon, the other Amorite king.

CHAP.

(*c*) *Giant.* The description of this gigantick king, who has the last of the race of the giants, whose statute we may guess at by the size of his bed, which being made of iron for strength was nine cubits in length, and four cubits in breadth after the cubit of a man, which being the common cubit, containing half a yard or one foot and a half of English measure, if reduced to yards or feet, will make four yards and a half, or thirteen feet and a half for the length, and two yards, or six feet, for the breadth of the bed.

(*d*) *Case.* So they were commanded, where the *social laws*, or laws of war and heraldry are set down: By which they were required, upon their approach to any city, to offer peace first, which if the inhabitants accepted, and surrendered to them, they should only make them tributaries. But if they refused peace, and put them to besiege and storm the place, they should, when they had taken it, put all the men to the sword; but might keep the women and children with the cattle and other spoil for themselves.

CHAP. IX.

BALAK, KING OF MOAB FEARS THE INROADS OF THE ISRAELITES. SENDS MESSENGERS TO BALAAM TO PERSUADE HIM TO CURSE THEM. BALAAM'S MERCENARY CONDUCT REMARKABLY CHASTISED. BALAK'S SACRIFICE. BALAAM'S PARABLE. BALAAM PROPHECIES THE SUCCESS OF THE ISRAELITES. THEY ARE DRAWN BY THE MOABITES INTO WHOREDOM AND IDOLATRY. THEY ARE SEVERELY PUNISHED FOR THEIR SINS.

ENCOURAGED with these successes the Israelites marched to the plains of Moab, and encamped on this side Jordan by Jericho. The approach of these victorious strangers struck a terror wherever they came, and the fame of their late success against the Amorites put the king of Moab and his people into a terrible (*a*) consternation. Balak, the king, knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty force of Israel, advised with the chiefs of (*b*) Midian, to whom he represented the common danger of these invaders: The result

(*a*) *Consternation.* If the Moabites had known the protection they were under, they needed not to have been afraid; for if they would have been quiet they were particularly exempted from the sword of Israel.

(*b*) *Midian.* The Midianites were neighbours and confederates with the Moabites; therefore *Balak* represented to them the danger, and asked their advice and assistance.

of

of their consultation was this; King Balak should send messengers to (*c*) Balaam, the son of Beor, who lived at Pethor, a city in Mesopotamia, to invite and bribe him to curse the Israelites; for they had so great an opinion of his skill and power in divination, that they thought he could curse or bless as he pleased. By general consent therefore they deputed a select number of their chief men with presents to invite him to go with them to Balak. When they came to him and delivered their message from the king, he desired them to tarry with him that night, for he could give them no answer till he had consulted the Lord.

But that omniscient being, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, could not be ignorant of Balaam's base motive; in order therefore to try in what manner he would endeavour to palliate the same, asked him, *What men they were that were with him? They are some*, said he, *whom the King of Moab hath sent to me, to let me know, that there is a people come out of Egypt, which cover the face of the earth; and to desire me to come to him and curse them, in hopes that he then may be able to overcome them, and drive them away.* But God said to him, *Thou shalt not go with them, nor curse that people, for they are blessed.*

Balaam, not daring to disobey the command of the Lord, got up in the morning, and dismissing the messengers, said, *Be gone to your own country; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.* They returned to the king, but misreported Balaam's answer; for, instead of telling him that God had refused to let him come, they told him, that Balaam refused to come. Whereupon Balak falsly suggesting to himself, that either the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition, or the value of the presents, his covetousness resolved to gratify both; and therefore he immediately dispatched away messengers of more honourable rank, and with larger proposals. *Let nothing*, he said, *hinder thee from coming to me; for I will promote thee to very great honour, and give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask, if thou wilt come and curse this people.*

Such was the prevalence of Balaam's avarice, that though he had been so solemnly prohibited from going and cursing the people whom God had blessed, he accepted of these presents of their enemies, and afterwards evaded compliance with their request, by assuring them he durst not, on any account, counteract the divine will, but to amuse them, desired they would tarry a little while he enquired farther of the Lord.

This was tempting God; who, therefore, in displeasure left him to his (*d*) own will. He had positively at first told him his mind, and it was

(*c*) *Balaam.* Several Fathers represent Balaam as a wizard and prophet of the devil; but by the free access he had to God, particularly *Numb.* xxiv. 13. and xxii. 18. he was not a prophet of the devil; though it is plain from the holy text he was covetous, and St. *Peter*, *epist.* 2. *ch.* ii. *v.* 15, says, *He loved the wages of Unrighteousness.*

(*d*) *Own Will.* From hence we may observe how unfit we are to choose for ourselves; especially in opposition to God's immediate commands and instructions.

the

the highest disobedience and presumption to pretend or offer at the reversing of it by a farther application. However, blinded with covetousness and pride, he again addressed himself to God, who, provoked at his obstinacy leaves him to himself, and tells him, *If the men come to call thee, (l) rise and go with them; but what I shall say to thee, that only shalt thou do.*

Notwithstanding this permission to go, God was resolved to make Balaam sensible of his displeasure. Upon this concession he got up in the morning, and went with the prince of Moab. But as he was on the road, the angel of the Lord stood on the way with a drawn sword in his hand.

A regard to the divine omnipresence was almost banished in the mind of Balaam, by the longing desire after the reward of his impiety; but it pleased God to give the ass, on which Balaam rode, such quickness of sight, that she both saw the angel and shunned him, by turning out of the road into the field. Balaam for this beat the ass, and struggling to put the beast into the way, the angel stood in another narrow way between two walls, which inclosed some vineyards. The ass seeing the angel, clung up to the wall and crushed Balaam's foot. This so incensed him, that he beat her again. But when the angel went farther, and stood in a narrow place, where the ass could not turn, she fell down under him. For this Balaam was in a greater passion than before, beating her with his staff.

But God, to rebuke the wilfulness of the prophet, miraculously opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to him, *What have I done to thee, that thou shouldest beat me these three times. Because,* said he, *thou hast deserved it, in mocking me: had I a sword in my hand I would kill thee.* The ass replied, *am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast been used to ride, ever since I was thine; did I ever serve thee so before?* He answered, *No.* Such an incident might have alarmed a mind less prepossessed than that of Balaam, which remained blinded, till God himself opened his eyes and let him see the angel standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; at the sight of which he bowed himself down, and fell on his face. The angel expostulated with him, and told him his undertaking was perverse, in attempting to go against the express command of God, and that therefore he was come to stop him; and but for his ass, which he had so barbarously abused, he had slain him.

Balaam, self-convicted, acknowledged his crime, and, as if he had not remembered God's positive injunction, that he should not go, if it so pleased God. However, the Lord resolved out of this man's wicked inclination to raise some advantage;

(l) *Rise*, &c. This by the consent of interpreters is looked upon, not as a command but a permission; and seems ironically spoken; as if God had said, "Since thou art so eager to go, thou knowest it is against my mind, take thy own course; Go if thou wilt. But yet thou shalt not gain thy end; thou shalt go with this restriction on thy will, Thou shalt say nothing but what I shall direct thee."

and therefore, since he was gone so far, he would not send him back, but make him who was hired to curse, be the instrument of pronouncing a blessing on his people.

Having thus chastised Balaam on the way, he suffered him to go on; but with this charge, that he should only speak what God should tell him.

Balaam then went on his journey with the prince of Moab; and when Balak understood that Balaam was coming, that he might the more oblige him by personal civilities, he came out to meet him (himself receiving him upon the confines of his Dominions.) At their meeting, the King in a friendly manner blamed Balaam for refusing to come to him upon his first sending, since it was in his power to advance him. But Balaam, to excuse himself, let him know what restraint the Lord had laid upon him. Then entertaining him publicly with his princes and great men that day, the next day he brought him up into the (*m*) High Places of (*n*) Baal, that from thence he might take a view of the camp of Israel.

Whilst they were here, the Prophet directed the king to order (*o*) seven altars to be erected for him; and seven oxen with seven rams to be prepared. Which being done, they both together offered an ox and a ram upon each altar. Then leaving Balak to stand by his burnt-offering, Balaam withdrew to consult the Lord, who met and instructed him what to say; and returned to Balak, whom he found standing at the altar, and the princes of Moab with him, he thus addressed himself to them: *thou hast caused me, O King, to come from (p) Aram, out of the mountains of the east to curse the family of Jacob, and bid defiance to Israel. But how shall I curse those whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy those whom the Lord hath not defied; From the top of the rocks I see their protector, and from the hills I behold him. Behold, this people shall be separated to God, and distinguished from all other people in religion, laws, and course of life: they shall not be reckoned among the nations.* Then setting forth the prosperity and increase of Israel, he wished that his lot might be with them in life and death.

Balak as much alarmed as incensed at the prophesy of Balaam, so contrary to his expectation, passionately enquired, *What hast thou done? I sent for thee to curse mine enemies, and thou hast blessed them.* Balaam excused himself by the necessity of his instructions, from which at this time it was not in his power to deviate.

(*m*) *High Places.* The Scripture calls *high*, those eminences and groves which the idolatrous nations consecrated to their Gods, and where they in a brutish and lascivious manner solaced themselves.

(*n*) *Baal.* As to the word Baal, it is sometimes a proper name (as here in this place) sometimes it is the common name of idols.

(*o*) *Seven.* The number *seven* was esteemed sacred among the Israelites (from whom probably Balaam might have learnt it) where the priest is said to sprinkle the blood of the bullock seven times before the veil of the Sanctuary.

(*p*) *Aram.* The same as *Mesopotamia*, which the Hebrews call *Abram Naharaim.*

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However, as Balak was not discouraged; from the change of the place he hoped a change of fortune, or better success; and therefore taking Balaam into the field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah, he tried whether he could curse from thence.

Balaam, who was willing to please him, had seven altars there, and a bullock and a ram offered on each. Then withdrawing again, as before to consult the Lord, he received fresh instructions. Balak now began to understand the interview between the Lord and Balaam; and upon his return to him and his attendants, who were big with expectation of the result, demanded what the Lord had spoken? Upon which Balaam, to bespeak the greater attention and regard to what he should say, began thus. *Consider, O Balak, thou son of Zippor, consider, that God, who hath already bleſſed Iſrael, and forbidden me to curſe them, is not like a man, that he ſhould renounce his promiſe, or repent of what he does. Hath he promiſed, and ſhall he not perform? Or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commiſſion to bleſs, and he hath bleſſed, and I cannot reverſe it.*

He does not approve of (r) afflictions or outrages againſt the poſterity of Jacob, nor of vexation or trouble againſt the poſterity of Iſrael. The Lord his God is with him, and the (s) ſhout of a king is in him. God hath brought him out of Egypt: He hath, as it were, the ſtrength of an (t) unicorn.

Surely no enchantment can prevail againſt Jacob, nor any divination againſt Iſrael. So that conſidering what God ſhall work this time for the deliverance of his people, all the world ſhall wonder and ſay, what hath God wrought! who hath put his people out of the reach of fraud or force, and turned the intended curſe into a bleſſing.

And to ſhew their future ſtrength and ſucceſs, the people ſhall riſe up as a great lion, and lift up themſelves as a young lion: They ſhall not lie down until they eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the ſlain.

Balak was so incensed at this peremptory prophesy of the immediate interposition of Providence in favour of God's chosen people; that he forbid Balaam to exercise his prophetic talent; though soon after his eagerness to have Israel cursed, made him change his mind; for he called for Balaam, and intreated him to try another place, in hopes God would permit him to curse Israel. Hereupon Balaam followed Balak to the top of mount *Beor*, a hill that looked toward the wilderness.

Whatever ground Balak might have

(r) *He does*, &c. The text should be rendered, *He does not approve of afflictions or outrages againſt the poſterity of Jacob, nor vexation or trouble againſt the poſterity of Iſrael.* This is very agreeable to all that Balaam said and did on this occasion, and stops the mouths of Libertines and Enthusiasts.

(s) *Shout.* So *Jerome*, *Arius*, *Montanus*, *Tremellius*, and *Junius* term it. That is, the triumph of a king victorious over his enemies.

(t) *Unicorn.* This animal (generally supposed to be the Rhinoceros) is frequently used to express extraordinary strength.

have for his hopes, it's certain Balaam knew the positive will of God in this case was to bless and not to curse; and this he had declared to be irreversible, when he told Balak God was not like fickle man. Yet stimulated with the blind desire of reward, he consented to Balak to tempt the Lord afresh; for he there erected seven altars, and laid seven sacrifices thereon.

But having in vain tried all his arts of (*u*) divination, and seeing that God was resolved to continue blessing Israel (without withdrawing, as before, under pretence to consult the Lord) looking on the camp of Israel, the (*w*) Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he cried out in an extasy, *How good are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!* Then by significant metaphors, he foretold the extent, fertility, and strength of Israel; and those that blessed them should be blessed, and those that cursed them should be cursed.

Balak now upbraided Balaam with deceit and falshood, and (*x*) smiting his hands together, being no longer able to restrain his rage, bid him haste and be gone; *For I thought*, said he, *to have promoted thee to great honour, if thou hadst answered my design in cursing Israel; but the Lord hath hindered thy preferment.*

Balaam had recourse to his old excuse, that he could not exceed the commands of the Lord, but must speak what he put in his mouth. And though he was willing to gratify the king of Moab in some sort, and perhaps (considering his covetous temper) to entitle himself to some reward, he offered to advertise them now at parting, what the Israelites should do to his people in the latter days, but still against his own inclination, he bestowed blessings on Israel, and prophesied a star should come forth from Jacob, and a rod from Israel; that it should smite the chiefs of Moab, and destroy the children of Seth; that Edom should fall under its power; and that the Amalekites and Kenites should be extirpated. In fine, he foretold, that the western nations, the Greeks and Romans, should vanquish the Assyrians, destroy the Hebrews, and perish themselves.

But the monstrous wickedness of this man is further apparent, for after these predictions, as if vexed at his own disappointment in missing the reward he expected, and to be revenged on the Israelites as the occasion of it, he instructed the Moabites and Midianites in a wicked artifice; which was to send their daughters to the camp of the Israelites, to draw those people into idolatry; the sure method to deprive them of the assistance of God, who protected them. This artifice succeeded; for the next account we have of the Israelites is,

(*u*) *Devination.* See Numb. xxiv. 1.

(*w*) *Spirit.* In Numb. xxiii. it is observable, that while Balaam used his art of divination or inchantment, he had only a word put into his mouth; but now having laid aside his inchantments, the Spirit of God came upon him.

(*x*) *Smiting*, &c. This was a great token of displeasure, as smiting the breast was of sorrow.

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that they lay incamped at (*a*) Shittim; where many of them were deluded by the Moabitish and Midianitish women, and were drawn in, not only to commit whoredom with them, but to assist at their sacrifices, and worship their Gods, even (*b*) Baal-Peor.

But God, who hated sin in his chosen people, suffered not their iniquity to go unpunished; for he shewed terrible resentment against both their atrocious crimes, commanding Moses to take the chiefs of those that had joined themselves to Baal-Peor, and hang them up before the Lord in the sight of all the people.

Moses accordingly gave charge to the (*c*) judges of Israel, to see execution done, on every one of the men under his charge, that sacrificed to Baal-Peor. But the divine justice did not stop here. Their whoredom must be punished as well as their idolatry; which was aggravated vastly by a person of considerable rank and dignity.

Bold *Zimri*, the son of *Salu*, prince of a chief house among the Simeonites, took *Cozbi* the daughter of *Zur*, who was also a prince of a chief house in Midian, and daringly brought her to the Israelitish camp, in contempt of Moses, and in sight of all the congregation, who, because of the late execution done upon their princes, stood weeping before the door of the tabernacle; and leading her openly into his tent, there lay with her.

This superlative impudence, and open violation of God's law, none offered to resent, but Phinehas, Aaron's grandson; who rising up from the congregation, and filled with a divine zeal, took a javelin in his hand and followed them to the tent; where in the very act of whoredom, he thrust them both through.

This zealous act of Phinehas put a stop to the plague; which God sent among the people for this audacious act of Zimri's, and the other lewdnesses and impieties of his comrades. However, there died on this occasion no less than (*d*) four and twenty thousand. Phinehas's holy zeal for God's honour, gained him not only high commendation, but a perpetual settlement of the priesthood on himself and his posterity.

CHAP.

(*a*) *Shittim.* Which signifies, *Turning aside.*

(*b*) *Baal-Peor.* Supposed to be the beastly *Priapus.*

(*c*) *Judges.* These were either the heads of the tribes, or the judges whom, by the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, with God's approbation, he had set over the people.

(*d*) *Four,* &c. In this Number it is probable, Moses does include the thousand princes that were hanged. Which computation reconciles this place to that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. x. 8. where he mentions but three and twenty thousand, without the thousand princes that were hanged.

CHAP. X.

THE ISRAELITES OVERCOME THE MIDIANITES WITHOUT SUSTAINING THE LEAST LOSS. THEY ARE NUMBERED; AND THE DIFFERENT TRIBES PUT IN POSSESSION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS. MOSES APPRISED OF HIS DEATH, ASSEMBLES THE PEOPLE, AND HAVING ENUMERATED THE PECULIAR BLESSINGS OF THE ALMIGHTY, AND ENJOINED ON THEM FUTURE OBEDIENCE, RECITED TO THEM A SONG, COMPOSED AT THE IMMEDIATE DIRECTION OF GOD. APPOINTS JOSHUA HIS SUCCESSOR, AND DIES.

THESE disorders thus quieted, and the offenders punished, the next thing was to take vengeance of the (*e*) Midianites, who had debauched the Israelites with their idolatry and whoredoms. In order to this, Moses commanded a detachment of twelve thousand select men, a thousand out of every tribe, to go against the Midianites; amongst whom went the zealous Phinehas, who carried with him the holy instruments, or trumpets to animate the people.

Such was the exertion of the divine power in behalf of the Israelites, that though very inferior in number, they slew five kings, and all their men; among whom was the wicked prophet (*g*) Balaam, who though he had before escaped the angel's sword, yet now fell a sacrifice to the injured people of God.

They burned all the cities and castles, took all the women and children prisoners, and seized on their cattle, flocks, and goods: after which, loaded with the spoils of their enemies, they returned in triumph to the Israelitish camp. In the way home they were met by Moses, Eleazer the High-Priest, and all the princes; who congratulated their success. But Moses, seeing the Midianitish woman among the captives, was much offended at the officers of the army for saving them; for these, said he, by the council of Balaam, caused the Israelites to sin against the Lord in the business of Peor, and provoked him to send a plague upon the congregation of Israel; and thereupon he commanded them to kill every male among the children, and every woman that had lain with man; and to save none alive but the virgin females. After this they were to abide seven days without the camp, and both soldiers and spoils pass through the ceremonies of a legal purification; which when they had performed; God directed Moses to take an account of the whole prey, and dividing it into two equal parts, to give one to the soldiers who had taken it, and the other part among the rest of the people that stayed at home. Out of the soldiers part he levied the five hundreth part, both of persons and

(*e*) *Midianites.* They inhabited the country on the East and North towards the Red-Sea.

(*g*) *Balaam.* By this it seems he was not got home; and it may be, with reason, conjectured, that he was devising much the same mischief against the Hebrews, whilst he was among the Midianites, as when he was among the Moabites; and therefore he justly fell by the sword of Israel.

beasts,

beasts, which he paid as a tribute to Eleazer the priest, for a heave-offering to the Lord; and out of the other part, which the people had, one part out of fifty of both persons and beasts, was given to the Levites.

The officers of the army, out of the other parts of the booty, which they had taken, as jewels of gold, bracelets, rings, ear-rings and tablets, brought their expiatory offering to atone for their transgressions in saving the Midianitish women, and their gratulatory offering of thanksgiving for so great a victory: the greatness of which may be guessed from the number of their prisoners and cattle; the virgin females were two and thirty thousand; all the rest of the people, men, women and children, were put to the sword.

The plunder in cattle and flocks, consisted of six hundred seventy and five thousand sheep, seventy and two thousand beeves, and sixty-one thousand asses; besides rich goods and ornaments; and to make this still more great and miraculous, the victory was gained without the loss of one man of Israel's side, as appears from the report the officers made upon a muster.

The Israelites thus taking possession of the country, on this side Jordan, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, observing it to be a fertile soil, and good pasturage, desired of Moses that they might settle in that country, upon condition that they should march with the other tribes to conquer the land where they were to settle; that they would not return till the others were in possession; and that they would claim no part of the lands that were beyond Jordan.

Moses at first thought they intended to venture no farther, but had a mind to sit down in a country ready gained, and leave their brethren, the rest of the tribes. Upon which he blamed them for offering by such a proposal to discourage the rest of the Israelites: but when he understood their real design, upon condition they performed their promise, he granted their request.

Moses then enumerated the several stations and removes, which the children of Israel made from Rameses in Egypt, to the river Jordan in Canaan, and described the bounds of the promised land, and gave the names of the persons appointed to divide it among the tribes of Israel. Orders were afterwards given, that the children of Israel should assign to the Levites eight and forty cities, with suburbs to them, in which the Levites might live amongst the tribes, and of which number six were appointed to be cities of refuge for the man-slayer to fly to, who had happened to kill a man by chance.

But provisions was made, that he, who should be duly convicted of wilful murder, should be put to death: and in capital cases, it was provided, that none should be convicted of such crimes by the evidence of one single man. There was a law likewise made, that every daughter, who should possess an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, should be married to one of the tribes of her father, that so the children of Israel might

might enjoy every one the inheritance of his father; and the inheritance not to be transferred to another tribe. This was grounded upon a law made before, which empowered daughters to inherit land, where the heirs male should be deficient; and was the case of *Zelophehad's* daughters, who, upon obtaining this act, were required to marry within the family of their (*l*) father's tribe.

By this time the forty years travel of the Israelites was near expired. Moses therefore considering that the present generation of the Israelites, now ready to pass over Jordan to take possession of the promised land, were either sprung up since the law was given at Mount Sinai, near forty years before, or too young to remember and understand the law then given, thought fit to repeat the law to them.

A little before his death therefore he assembled the people of Israel, on the first day of the eleventh month, in the fortieth year from their departure out of Egypt (the people being yet in the plains of Moab by Jordan, and near Jericho) he repeated to them briefly all that had befallen their fathers since they left Egypt, the gracious dealings of God with them, their unruliness, disobedience and rebellions, which had so often provoked the Lord to punish them, and by which means they brought upon him that grievous sentence, that they should not enter into the good land.

This account he often repeated, that they might take warning by the miscarriages of their fore-fathers.

Then he repeated the decalogue, and divers other laws and precepts, formerly given, though not without some variation, with the addition of some new laws on divers subjects, and some explanations of the old; exhorting them to a strict observation of them, promising that they should soon enter the land of Canaan, and also commanded them to destroy all the idols of the inhabitants of the country, and to extirpate the people.

He encouraged them to be faithful unto God, assuring them, if they kept his commandments they should have blessings heaped upon them; and threatened them with all manner of calamities, if they departed from them.

He renewed the covenant with the people in the name of the Lord; commanding them, with a loud voice, to proclaim on the mountains of *Gerizim* and *Habal*, beyond Jordan, blessings to all those who kept the covenant, and curses to those who broke it; and to erect an altar in the land of Canaan, on which they should write the terms and conditions of their covenant with God.

These things, with rehearsals sometimes of their fathers, and their own prevarications, Moses not only deli-

(*l*) *Father's.* They were married into the families or some that were of the families of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. This takes off the force of their argument, who from hence would infer the lawfulness of marriages between first-cousins.

vered

vered to the people by word of mouth, but wrote them in a book, which he gave into the custody and care of the Levites, with direction from the Lord, that they should put it into the side of the ark, to be kept there for a witness against Israel, if they should rebel.

Besides this, Moses, by the immediate direction of God, composed a song, in which were at large described, by the many benefits and favours of God to his people, their ingratitude to, and forgetfulness of him; the punishments by which he corrected them, with threatening of greater judgments if they persisted to provoke him by a repetition of their follies.

This song Moses recited to the people, and gave order that they should learn it, and repeat it often; that when for their transgressing the law, many calamities and troubles should befal them, this song might be a witness for God against them.

The time was just now approaching, and the people ready to pass over Jordan; but the Lord having before told Moses, that he should not conduct the people into the promised land, because of his error at the waters of Meribah, he bade him now get him up into the mountain of Abarim, unto mount Nebo, in the land of Moab, over-against Jericho, and take a view of the land of Canaan, and then die there on that mount, as his brother Aaron had died on mount Hor.

Moses had before endeavoured to deprecate one part of his sentence, his not being permitted to enter into the promised land, but in vain; he therefore humbly submitted to the Almighty's pleasure now, and took a solemn farewel of the people in a prophetic blessing, which he pronounced upon each tribe, as Jacob had done just before his death.

And having before, by God's command, appointed Joshua to be his successor, to conduct the people to the promised land, he laid his hands upon him, in such a solemn and public manner, as gave all the people to understand, that after Moses's death Joshua was to be their leader. Moses went up to the top of Pisgah, over-against Jericho, from whence, as the Lord had promised him, he could take a full view of the countries round about.

Though this servant of God was very aged, being an hundred and twenty years old, and on the verge of the grave, yet he was in such good health and strength, that his eyes were neither dim, nor his natural force abated; therefore, whilst these lasted, he surveyed with pleasure the beauteous prospect.

He viewed Jericho: saw Lebanon's fair cliffs and lofty cedars; and then resigned his soul into the hands of seraph's, who waited to convey him to a happier Canaan than what he had just before surveyed.

The Lord, sensible that the Israelites were prone on the slightest temptation to idolatry, lest they, when they remembered the wonderful things Moses had performed for them, should pay any superstitious adoration to his remains after his death, paid the funeral honours to this great prophet himself; and in a valley in the land of Moab, over-against Beth-

Peor, buried him so secretly, that no man ever knew where his sepulchre was.

Thus departed this life, * Moses, a most eminent servant of God, and the great conductor of his chosen people, by whom he was lamented with great solemnity, weeping and mourning for him in the plains of Moab thirty days.

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* *Moses.* Thus far the sacred history was of Moses's inditing, which contains the five first Books of the Bible, and is thence called the *Pentateuch.* All antiquity, both sacred and profane, acknowledge Moses to have been the legislator of the Jews; and that whole nation had always carefully preserved his Books as containing their Law.

As to the truth of the history, we have several proofs.

1. It is the most ancient history in the world; for whether Moses was co-temporary with Inachus the first king of Argos, who lived six hundred years before the war of Cecrops, king of Athens, who reigned three hundred years before that war, it is certain he was much older than Homer, or Hesiod, or any profane writer.

2. Moses was the only person that had given a plain historical account of the origin of the World, and who had continued that history uniform, and without any interruption, to his own time. All that others have written of the first ages was, as they owned themselves, mere ignorance, darkness, and fable.

3. Moses wrote at a time when he could be sure of the truth of what he wrote, and when it might have been easy to have convicted him of falshood, had he delivered any fables.

4. We have nothing in ancient history, to prove that the World is older than Moses represents it. Fables invented for the Poets have been exploded even by Heathen authors.

5. His history agrees with the profane historians of several nations. We there find the originals of several nations, and their ancient names, which many of them have preserved. But if religion did not convince us, that the Books of Moses were written by divine inspiration, yet reason ought to persuade us, that this history of Moses is true, and the only one wherein we can find when the World began, and how long it has lasted.

As for the last chapter of Deuteronomy, it was probably written by Joshua, as a preparation to his history, and could not be supposed to be written by Moses, as giving an account of his death.

Josephus, the celebrated historian, gives Moses the following character:

"He exceeded all that ever went before him in wisdom, and made the best use of what he understood.

His address as a Speaker, was admirable, especially in those speeches which were made in public. But at the same time he was so great a master of his own passions, that he seemed to have none, or knew them only by name, and by observing them in others.

He was one of the greatest Commanders. As a Prophet there was never his equal; for all his words were oracles. Nor was he less famous to posterity for his writings, than he was to the age he lived in for his actions."

Jos. Antiq. lib. 4. chap. 8. sect. 49.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

JOSHUA SUCCEEDS MOSES IN THE CONDUCT OF THE ISRAELITES, AND IS FORMALLY INSTALLED INTO HIS OFFICE. IS ENCOURAGED BY THE DIVINE PROMISE. SENDS OUT SPIES TO VIEW THE LAND OF JERICHO: THEY ARE CONCEALED BY RAHAB, AND AFTERWARDS RETURN. THE ISRAELITES PASS THE RIVER JORDAN. CIRCUMCISION RENEWED.

JOSHUA after the death of Moses, who was, under God, the great conductor of the Israelites, succeeded to his office, and was installed into the same with the usual ceremonies. Having been immediately under the direction of Moses, near forty years, in which he had been eye-witness to many wonderful exertions of providence in behalf of God's chosen people; he appeared to have been peculiarly adapted to the very important work allotted him, at the pleasure of the Almighty, and, by the genera lconsent of the people, the priest Eleazar laying his hand upon him, and disposing to him some of the honour that was upon himself, in the sight of the whole congregation.

Being now ready to enter and take possession of the promised land, God, for Joshua's greater encouragement, strengthened his former commission, by giving him a more immediate and express command, as he had before done to his servant (*a*) Moses, he led the people over Jordan; telling him, that every place upon which the sole of their feet should tread, should be their own; and assuring him, that there should not any man be able to stand before him all the days of his life: For, as he had been with Moses, so he would be with him, and never fail nor forsake him: Therefore he bade him be strong and of good courage, for he should divide the land for an inheritance to the people. And to engage him to a performance of the law which he had delivered to Moses, he annexed a continual series of prosperity and success; charging him to make it his study day and

(*a*) *Moses.* God spake now to Joshua by his angel, as he had done to Moses when he gave him the law upon mount Sinai, as appears from *Gal.* iii. 19. For angels are the ministring spirits of God, *Heb.* i. 14. For which reason, as often as it is said in the Old Testament that God appeared or spoke to any one, it must be understood, that he did not by himself but by his angels.

night,

night, as the standard of all his future actions, and repeating his former assurance of his presence with him wheresoever he went.

Joshua, thus encouraged by the promise of God, prepared to execute the divine command, and that nothing material might be omitted, he ordered the officers to go through the camp and give notice to the people, that within a few days they should pass the Jordan, in order to possess the land which the Lord their God had given them, and that they should provide themselves with victuals for such a march. The city of Jericho was just opposite to the place where they were to pass. Joshua therefore (*b*) before his order for their making provision for this march, sent two spies thither to observe the situation and strength of the place, and the avenues to it; because it would be the first place they were to attack, after they had passed the river.

These spies entering Jericho, went to a public house of entertainment, which was kept by (*c*) Rahab, and there took up their lodging. But being observed by some to go in there, information was speedily given to the king of Jericho, that two Israelites were come to search the country.

Upon this, the king sent to Rahab to produce them; but she, having timely notice, had hid them upon the (*d*) roof of the house under the stalks of the flax, which she had spread there.

Having thus secured the men, she put off the king's messengers with a feigned story, pretending that some men came to her house, but she knew not what they were, nor whence they came; and that when it was dark, before the gates were shut, they went out, but she knew not whither; and to prevent any farther suspicion, she advised to pursue them quickly, for they could not be far off. They therefore sent out several to take them, who went as far as the fords of Jordan, but in vain.

As soon as they were departed, Rahab went to the men she had hid, and thus accosted them; *I know the Lord hath given you this land, and the fame of you is become so terrible to us, that our people are utterly discouraged.*

We have heard, how the Lord hath dried up the water of the Red Sea for you to pass over, when ye came out of Egypt; and how ye subdued Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings on the other side of Jordan. These actions have flashed terror amongst our people, and quite dispirited them. Your

(*b*) *Before.* This direction for marching is mentioned in the text, before the sending the spies to Jericho. But it seems the spies were sent before that, and returned to the camp at Shittim, before they took their march towards Jordan.

(*c*) *Rahab.* Many interpreters have been at a loss to conceive why this woman, who was an hostess, and kept an house of entertainment for strangers, should be called an harlot. But they ought to have considerered, that in the Eastern countries, in those early ages, every woman who kept an house of publick entertainment, was reckoned a prostitute, and that she was reckoned a victualler is unquestionable.

(*d*) *Roof.* The roofs of houses were then built flat, so that they could walk upon them and set their goods there, having battlements round them to secure them from falling off.

And such a roof it was that *David* afterwards walked upon, when he unhappily espied the fair *Bathsheba* bathing herself.

God

God is the only God in heaven and earth.

Now therefore, in regard of the ſervice I have done in concealing you, ſhew favour to me and my family, when you come into power, and ſave us alive; and of this ye ſhall give me ſome aſſurance.

They readily promised upon their lives to secure her, and all that belonged to her. Upon which she let them down by a cord from the window, which faced the country, for her house stood on the town-wall.

When they were down, she advised them to make to the mountains to avoid the pursuers, and to conceal themselves three days, till the search was over.

The spies, seeing the sincerity of the woman, in consulting their security, resolved to make her easy in their promise to her; and for a token of their integrity, in the performance of it, gave her this farther assurance: When she should see the Israelitish army approach the town, they bade her be sure to tie a (*e*) scarlet twine in the window through which she let them down, and to bring her father and mother, brethren, and all her family, home to her, and be careful to keep them within doors, that when their forces should enter the town, by this token they might distinguish the house and spare them. And if any should straggle from their house, their blood should be upon their own heads; but if any one in the house should come to any damage, they would answer for it. To these terms she gladly agreed, and so dismissed them.

The spies, having hitherto thus happily succeeded, took Rahab's advice, and made the best of their way to the mountains, where they lay hid three days; in which time those that went in pursuit of them, despairing to find them, returned to Jericho; and the spies, descending from the mountains, forded over Jordan, arrived safe in the camp, and gave Joshua, their general, a faithful account of their expedition, adding, That for certain the Lord had delivered the country in their hands; for the people were quite dispirited at the fame of them.

Joshua, alarmed at this information, departed from Shittim, and led the people down to the river. Then putting the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, in mind of the agreement made between Moses and them, That they, leaving their families and cattle on this side Jordan, should with their best forces go over armed before their brethren, to help to subdue their enemies and place them in their possessions. They acknowledged the agreement, and declared their readiness to go; promising in all things to be subject to him their general, as they had been to Moses, and in all things to obey his commands, under the penalty of death.

(*e*) *Scarlet.* This being a token of deliverance to *Rahab* and her family, is not unaptly reckoned a type of the blood of Christ, by which we are delivered from the death of soul and body. This is the opinion of those fathers who wrote allegorically, particularly St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.

Provision being made for the army in their march, the officers going through the host, commanded the people, that when they should see the ark of the covenant of the Lord their God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then they should move and follow it, that they might know the way by which they were to go; because they had never before passed that way.

And that a decency might be observed in their march, direction was given that they should leave a space of about two thousand cubits between the ark and them.

These dispositions being made, Joshua early in the morning, on the ninth day of the first month, exhorted the people to sanctify themselves, because the Lord would do wonders next day among them: and giving orders for the priests to move, they took up the ark, and marched with it before the people to the banks of Jordan, where they halted.

Here the Lord told Joshua, that he would so distinguish him in the sight of Israel, that they should know his presence should be with him, as it had been with Moses.

He directed him to bid the priests, who were to carry the ark, stop upon the brink of the river, which they did; and Joshua thereupon calling the people together, to hear the words of the Lord their God, told them, *That they ſhould hereby know, that the living God was amongſt them, and would drive out the nations from before them: For the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth, ſhould paſs before them into the river Jordan, and as ſoon as the feet of the prieſts that bare it ſhould touch the waters, they ſhould divide, and ſtand on a heap.*

Accordingly, the priests marched into the river with the ark, and stopping in the midst of it, they stood on firm ground; the rapid stream dividing, and the waters forgetting their fluidity, condense in heaps to afford them a dry passage.

Thus did God make good his word to Joshua, in promising to magnify him in the sight of the people, by dividing the waters of Jordan, as he had done before to Moses, when the Israelites had passed the Red Sea.

Before this miraculous exertion of divine power, the Lord commanded Joshua to select twelve men, one out of each tribe, who, as soon as the people had passed the river, were to take up twelve stones from the place where the priests stood on dry ground, according to the number of the twelve tribes, and to set them up as a memorial of this great miracle, in that place. He commanded them likewise to take other twelve stones and to carry them on shore, for another memorial of the same miracle.

The priests that carried the ark walked on dry ground to the midst of Jordan, and stopping there as Joshua had ordered them, he commanded the rest of the people to follow, forty thousand of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, well armed, leading the Van.

When they were all safely arrived on the other side of the river, the General commanded the priests that bare

bare the ark, which stood in the midst of Jordan, till all the people had passed over to come out of the river with it, which they had no sooner done, but the waters returned to their natural channel, and overflowed the banks as they usually did.

The Israelites, having thus securely passed Jordan, on the tenth day of the first month, encamped in a place called afterwards Gilgal, which was in the east-border of Jericho. Here Joshua erected the twelve stones, which the twelve men had brought out of Jordan as a monument to posterity, that when the descendants of the Israelites in future times should ask the reason of it, they might know, that the Lord their God had dried up the waters of Jordan, and caused his people Israel to pass that river on dry land, as he had formerly dried up the Red Sea, for their passage out of Egypt; and that all the people of the earth might be sensible of the omnipotency of the mighty God of Israel.

This extraordinary event was soon rumoured throughout the adjacent parts, and filled the people with amazement and horror; for when the kings of the Amorites, which were on the west side of Jordan, and the kings of the Canaanites, which inhabited by the sea, heard that the Lord had miraculously conveyed his people over the river by dividing the waters, their hearts sunk for fear, and their courage failed them.

Joshua having thus conducted the Israelites over the river, God commanded him to cause them all to be circumcised: Which being done, the Lord said to Joshua, *This day I have taken away the (f) shame of Egypt from you.* And from this act of circumcision, the place where it was done was then called (g) *Gilgal.* Here the Israelites tarried till their circumcision-wounds were healed; and here it was they kept the (h) passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month in the evening.

Now the Israelites began to enjoy the good of the Land; the delicious products of the promised inheritance: For on the next day after the passover they eat of the corn, and there being plenty of all fruits, on the morrow the manna was withdrawn.

CHAP. II.

AN ANGEL APPEARS TO JOSHUA. JERICHO TAKEN. THE WALLS FALL DOWN. THE ISRAELITES ARE CONQUERED AT AI. ACHAN PUNISHED AS THE CAUSE OF GOD'S DISPLEASURE. THE ISRAELITES CONQUER THEIR ENEMIES AT AI.

ALL things being ready for approaching the city of Jericho, Joshua gave the word, and the army marched

(f) *Shame.* As the Israelites had been in a state of slavery in Egypt, which always implies shame, God here declares upon their passing the river, that their former reproach is taken away, and they are become as free as their tyrannical masters the Egyptians.

(g) *Gilgal.* This place had its name from the rite of circumcision, which was there renewed. It lay about two miles to the north-east of Jericho: and St. Jerom tells us, that it was, in his time, held in great veneration by the inhabitants of this country.

(h) *Paſsover.* This was the third Passover the Israelites celebrated.

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marched towards it. The place was strong, well provided, and full of inhabitants, who had retired into it, and seemed resolved to make a brave defence. Joshua therefore undertook to view the place by himself, in order to find out the most advantageous approaches to it. Whilst he was making his observation, there appeared, as he thought, the awful form of a man, but with a lustre in his face, that bespoke him more than mortal. In his hand he held a flaming sword, and his whole appearance far surpassed any thing of human nature. The Israelitish General advanced to this (*a*) great Unknown, with a courage becoming his character, and boldly demanded who he was for? He answered, For Israel, of whose army and people he was the guardian.

At these words the General fell (*b*) prostrate, and waited the command of his Lord, who bade him loose his sandals, and not profane the holy place with irreverent approaches. Joshua obeyed, and received new orders for the better management of the siege of Jericho: he was to cause all the forces to march round the place six days successively, and that the seventh day the priests should take the seven trumpets made of ram's horns, which were used to declare the *Jubilee* year; that they should go before the ark, and round the city, and when the trumpets sounded first loud, and then low, the people should all give a shout, for then the walls of the city should fall, and every man should march in at the place which was directly before him.

Having rounded the city six days as they were commanded, on the seventh by break of day they compassed it seven times, and at the seventh time, when the priests blew up the trumpets, the general said to the people, *Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city.* With that the people gave a shout, and thereupon the walls of the city fell down flat; so that the army marched directly up to it, and took it, putting all to the sword, both man and beast, old and young: only Rahab, and those in her house were saved alive; for Joshua had given a strict charge before-hand to the two spies (which she had formerly concealed) to take care, when the town should be taken, to go to her house, and bring out her family, in discharge of their oath to her. Which they accordingly did, and left

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The first was, the day before they came out of Egypt.

The second, was the year after upon their receiving the Law, and setting up the Tabernacle in Sinai.

The third, was this here in the Holy Land, in the plains of Jericho.

(*a*) *Great*, &c. He calls himself the captain of the Lord's host, and the Jews always believed that he was the Messiah, who had assumed a human shape to encourage their Leader.

Thus Christ appeared to *Mary Magdalen* in the garden in the shape of a gardener. To the two disciples walking to *Emmaus*, he appeared in the habit of a traveller, &c.

(*b*) *Proſtrate.* By this act of adoration, the title of Lord, performed and given by Joshua and accepted by the other, it is evident, that this Guardian or Captain of the Lord's host was Christ, the son of God, who was pleased in this manner to appear to Joshua, both to encourage and direct him.

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her with all her kindred and substance safe (*f*) without the camp of Israel. Then setting fire to the city they destroyed every thing in it, except the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, which were put into the treasury of the house of the Lord, as it had been commanded. And lest any one should attempt to rebuild this city, Joshua published this prophetick imprecation on the bold undertaker; *That he ſhould lay the foundation thereof in his firſt-born, and ſet up the gates thereof in his youngeſt ſon:* by which he meant, that it should be the (*g*) ruin of his family.

Joshua seems to have been persuaded of the success of this undertaking, for before the city was taken, Joshua had cautioned the people not to spare any thing that was in it, but to destroy all that lay in their way, except silver, gold, brass, and iron; which were to be consecrated to the Lord. And therefore he warned them not to meddle with any thing, for fear of bringing a curse, not only upon themselves, but upon all the nation of the Israelites.

Notwithstanding the strict charge of Joshua against meddling with any thing that was devoted to this general destruction, or consecrated to the Lord, yet so prevailing was the sacrilegious thirst of gold, that one of the tribe of Judah, whose name was *Achan*, contrary to the command of the general, took some things of the spoil of either sort and hid them. This proved of ill consequence to Israel in general, which was discovered upon this occasion.

Joshua being desirous to take in a little city, named Ai, near Bethaven, to the east of Bethel, and knowing that it was neither populous nor well defended, detached a body of three thousand men only to go and attack it; who no sooner approached the town, but the inhabitants sallied out and repulsed them, and drove them to their camp; whither those that escaped went so frighted, that they brought a terror upon the whole army.

This defeat so afflicted Joshua, that rending his cloaths, and prostrating himself before the ark of the Lord, he lay there till the evening, both he and the elders, in token of extreme sorrow and humiliation, sprinkling dust on their reverend heads.

But Joshua being wholly ignorant of the offence, and desirous to know the cause that had provoked God thus to desert his people, in this humble expostulation, complained to him, *Wherefore, O Lord God, haſt thou brought this people over Jordan to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites to deſtroy them? We had been happy, hadſt thou permitted us to have dwelt on the other ſide of Jordan. What ſhall I ſay, when Iſrael turn their backs upon their ene-*

(*f*) *Without*, &c. Being Aliens, or Heathens, they were not permitted to come within the camp, till they were proselyted, and legally purified.

(*g*) *Ruin.* This was exactly fulfilled in *Hiel* the Bethelite; who in the days of *Ahab* king of Israel (about five hundred years after) began to rebuild Jericho with the loss of his eldest son *Abiram*, and finished it with the loss of *Segub* his youngest son.

mies? For when the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of this land ſhall hear this, they will encompaſs us, and cut us off; and what will become of thy honour?

Leſt Joshua ſhould be diſpirited by the conqueſt the enemy had obtained over them, or pine under the apprehenſion of being deſerted by him, God told him there was a latent cauſe of his diſpleaſure among the people: that ſome of them had taken of the (*h*) accurſed thing, and alſo of thoſe things which were devoted to the Lord, and, pretending as if they had brought it all into the treaſury of God, had concealed it for their own uſe. And to put him in a way to clear the camp of this accurſed thing, which had brought this judgment upon them, the Lord commanded Joshua to proclaim among the people; *There is an accurſed thing in the midſt of thee, O Iſrael: Ye cannot ſtand before your enemies, until ye have removed the accurſed thing from among you.* Then directing Joshua, how he ſhould find out the offender, and when he was found and convicted, how he ſhould be puniſhed; he early next morning ſummoned all the tribes before the Lord; and the lot being caſt upon the tribes, the tribe of Judah was the tribe to whom the guilty perſon belonged. Then proceeding by lot from tribe to family, from family to houſehold, and thence to particular perſons, the lot fell at laſt upon Achan. Having thus happily diſcovered the perſon, Joshua, like a prudent judge, with great mildneſs examined the criminal, and brought him to a confeſſion. *I have ſinned againſt the Lord God of Iſrael, ſaid he, for when I ſaw among the ſpoil a (i) royal garment, and two hundred ſhekels of ſilver, with a (k) wedge of gold of fifty ſhekels weight, my covetouſneſs prompted me to take them; which I did, and hid them in the earth in the midſt of my tent.*

Joshua, for his more evident conviction, ſent meſſengers to Achan's tent, who finding the things hid, as he had confeſſed, brought them to the aſſembly, and laid them before the Lord. And now Achan being duly convicted, by his own confeſſion and the notoriouſneſs of the fact, Joshua proceeded to execution by the expreſs command of God; which was thus: they took Achan, with the garments, the money, and wedge of gold, as evidences of his guilt, and with him his (*l*) ſons, his daughters, his cattle;

(*h*) *Accurſed.* In the ſame ſenſe is the word *anathema* uſed in the New Teſtament, by St. *Paul*, who pronounces offenders *anathema*, ſeparated from God, that is, accurſed: which is the old word for excommunication, upon the breach of ſeveral canons in the moſt early ages of the church.

In this one inſtance 'tis obſervable, that though it was but one man that was actually guilty; yet the guilt was charged upon the whole people, and they felt the effects thereof, till they had convicted and puniſhed the offender. How great then is the guilt of nations in general, where ſins are epidemical, and repeated from age to age?

(*i*) *Royal.* This is rendered Babylonish, ſuppoſed to be rich, ſuch a garment as the kings of Babylon formerly wore.

(*k*) *Wedge.* This was made in the form of a tongue, and for that reaſon is not improperly ſometimes called a *Tongue of Gold.*

(*l*) *Sons,* &c. This judgment only appertains to God and to whom he will reveal it. To man he hath expreſſly commanded, not to puniſh the fathers for the children, nor the children for the father's ſake, but that every one ſhould be put to death for his own ſin.

his

his tent, and all his moveables, and brought them into the valley of *Achor* (which from him took its name, signifying trouble) where he and his family being first stoned, were afterwards burned. And to perpetuate the memory of this for a warning to others, they raised a great heap of stones over them.

The vengeance of the Almighty being appeased by the sentence executed upon the delinquent Achan, he encouraged Joshua to attack Ai afresh, assuring him that he had given the king of Ai and all his people and country into his hand; and that he should do to them as he had done to Jericho and her king; only for the encouragement of the soldiers, he allowed them plunder of the city and the cattle for themselves; giving Joshua particular *(m)* instructions to lay a party of men in *(n)* ambuscade behind the city.

In order to this action, Joshua selected thirty thousand men, out of which he appointed five thousand to hide themselves between Bethel and Ai, who, upon the signal that he should give them, which was by holding up a spear with a banner upon it, should enter the city, and set it on fire; himself having first by another stratagem drawn all the forces out of the town to persue him in his pretended flight.

Every thing being prepared according to the direction of Joshua, he drew up before the north part of the city of Ai, and towards night he marched into the valley in sight of the enemy to tempt them to sally out upon him. This succeeded as Joshua desired; for the king of Ai thinking he had them sure now, early the next morning drew out all his forces to give Israel battle; who at the first charge gave way, and fled.

This so animated the king of Ai's army, that concluding the Israelites fled indeed through fear of them, they called out all the citizens to assist in the pursuit; which they eagerly did, leaving the town naked and defenceless. But this confidence of victory cost them dear; for when Joshua by his sham flight had drawn them a good distance from the city, he gave the signal to the ambuscade, who immediately entered the city, and set it on fire. When Joshua by the smoak, perceived his men had possessed themselves of the town, he faced about, and charged the Aian army; who, not in the least expecting the Israelites would rally, began to think of retiring into the city: but when they saw their city in flames, they were so dispirited that they had no power to fight or fly. In the mean time the ambuscade having performed their orders in burning the city, fell upon the rear of the king of Ai's dismayed forces, who being thus encompassed were cut to pieces.

Having thus completely vanquished the enemy; Joshua marched to Ai and put all he found in it to the

(m) Instructions. God would not destroy Ai by a miracle, as he had done Jericho, because he had a mind to make his people formidable for their power and policy to other nations, with whom they were afterwards to engage.

(n) Ambuscade. This was the first ambuscade we read of in history.

sword:

sword: so that the number of the slain that day amounted to twelve thousand men and women.

The cattle and spoil of the city was given to the soldiers, who burnt the city and made it a heap of rubbish. As for the king of Ai, he was taken prisoner in the fight; and being brought before the general, he was by his command hanged on a tree till sun-set, at which time he was taken down, and buried under a great heap of stones at the entrance of the gate of the city.

CHAP. III.

JOSHUA ERECTS AN ALTAR, AND REPEATS TO THE PEOPLE THE WORDS OF THE LAW OF MOSES. SEVERAL KINGS COMBINE AGAINST ISRAEL, AND ARE CONDEMNED TO PERPETUAL BONDAGE. JOSHUA RESCUES GIBEON FROM THE ATTACK OF FIVE KINGS. IS EMPOWERED TO CONFIRM HIS AUTHORITY BY AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMAND. RETURNS AND RE-ENCAMPS HIS ARMY IN GILGAL. OBTAINS DIVERS SIGNAL VICTORIES. THE TRIBES ARE APPOINTED THEIR DISTINCT LOTS OF INHERITANCE. DEATH OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA having thus happily succeeded in this action against Ai, in token of gratitude to the great giver of victory, erected an Altar to him in Mount Ebal, as the Lord had by Moses before commanded; on which he offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And then he not only read unto the people, both Israelites and strangers, the words of the law given by Moses, but wrote also upon great stones a (*o*) copy of the law which Moses had written.

The fame of the Israelites success against Jericho and Ai, and the terrible slaughter of the inhabitants, alarmed all the kings on that side Jordan, who, consulting the common security, confederated together, and entered into a league for their mutual defence.

But the Gibeonites, who were more deeply affected with the rumour of the Israelites courage and power, distrusting a confederated force against so great and numerous a people, and so well skilled in the art of war, had recourse to a stratagem to save themselves from the general destruction, which they plainly perceived hung over their heads.

They chose a certain number of their men, who were instructed to feign themselves to be ambassadors, come from a far country, to treat for peace and enter into a league with Israel.

To give this deception an air of truth, they dressed themselves in old cloaths, with old clouted shoes on their feet, and put dry mouldy bread into old sacks, and wine into old * bottles.

Thus accoutred, they came to the

(*o*) *Copy.* The language of Jews was the same that the Canaanites used, and therefore it is no great difficulty to apprehend how many of the Gentile nations came to imitate the Jews in many of their religious observances and rites, since the Mosaic law was so publicly exposed to the sight of all.

* *Old Bottles.* These bottles were made of leather, in which they formerly, and now in some countries keep their wine.

Israelitish

Israelitish camp at Gilgal, and presenting themselves before the general, told him, they were come from a far country, and desired to enter into a league with Israel.

The people at first suspected these ambassadors, and told them, that perhaps they possessed part of that land which God had given them, and, if so, they could not make peace with them. Joshua putting the question directly to them, asked them, who they were, and from whence they came? to which they cunningly, but falsely replied, *From a far country are we come, where we have heard of the fame of the Lord thy God; of all that he did for thee in Egypt, and to Sihon and Og, the Amorite kings. Wherefore our governors bid us take provision for our journey, and tell you, we are your servants, and desire to be in amity with you.*

Then producing their mouldy bread, their torn bottles, and their old cloaths, and shoes, they assured them, that they took the bread hot out of their houses, when they came from home; that their bottles were then new; and that their garments and shoes were worn old by reason of the length of their journey.

The Israelites were prevailed on in this respect, though they had an infallible method of coming to the knowledge of the deceit. But neglecting to ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord, they suffered themselves to be imposed on by the seeming simplicity of the subtle Gibeonites.

This stratagem of theirs had its desired effect. The credulous Israelites believed the plausible story of the Gibeonites, confirmed sufficiently, as they thought, by demonstrable tokens, and of which their own eyes were judges: so that without any farther hesitation or scruple, they received them into their alliance; Joshua making peace with them to let them live, and the princes of the congregation swearing solemnly to observe it.

But within three days this cheat was discovered; and they, who pretended to come from a distant country, proved to be their neighbours, and inhabited a part of that land which God had given Israel to possess.

When the Israelites found out the design of the Gibeonites, which was to prevent their cities from sharing the fate of their neighbours, they could not forbear mutinying against the princes who had sworn to observe the league; which they perceiving, endeavoured to pacify them by urging the necessity they were under of keeping their oath, lest they should incur God's displeasure; and that though the alliance extended to the saving their lives, yet it did not exempt them from tribute or service, from which they might reap considerable advantages, intending to make them hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the use of all the congregation.

This being approved, appeased the people, and Joshua, calling for the Gibeonites, expostulated the matter with them, for thus imposing on and deceiving them: they in excuse answered, that they were sensible God had given them all the land where

they dwelt, and commanded them to kill all the inhabitants; and that they had made use of this stratagem to save their lives.

Though they escaped with their lives, they were justly condemned to perpetual bondage, as a punishment for their wicked design, and Joshua, himself pronounced this sentence against them: *Now therefore are ye curſed, and there ſhall none of you be freed from being bondmen, even hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the (u) Houſe of my God.*

The Gibeonites, glad to come off so well, replied, *Behold, we are in thy land, do with us what thou wilt.*

Thus Joshua delivered the Gibeonites from the fury of the Israelites, who would have put them all to the sword. But though they had by this policy saved their lives, with the loss of their liberty; yet their neighbours the Amorites put them in fresh danger of losing them. For deserting the common interest, and making a separate league with Israel for themselves, they resolved to take revenge of them.

Accordingly, *Adonizedec*, King of * *Jebus*, taking with him four neighbouring kings, Homan, king of Hebron, Piram, king of Jarmuth, Japhia, King of Lachish, and Debir, king of Eglon, with their joined forces, they encamped before Gibeon.

The Gibeonites, not daring to trust to the strength of their city against so potent and confederated a force, dispatched away messengers to their new and great allies, to their camp at Gilgal, to acquaint them, That the kings of the Amorites, that dwelt in the mountains, had armed against them; and to entreat them to come up to their relief with speed.

Joshua was bound in honour and interest to succour them, to which God himself gave particular encouragement, assuring him of victory. Upon which Joshua, by a swift march, came up with them by night, and surprized them in the morning.

The action was hot for some time, but they were soon put to flight; and as they fled, a storm of hail overtook them, which fell with such violence upon them, that more were destroyed by the hail-stones than by the sword.

The five confederate kings, escaping the storm, in their flight, made to a cave in a place called Madekah, and there hid themselves from the pursuit of the enemy; but Joshua having intelligence of their concealment, ordered the cave to be blocked up, and set a guard upon it, to prevent their escape; commanding the rest of the army to continue the pursuit, and to do execution on their enemies, lest they should retreat to any fortified place.

That they might not want time to complete their victory, Joshua, addressing himself to God in prayer, received authority from him to command the sun, in the sight of Israel, to stand still, saying, *Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon.*

(u) *Houſe.* From the Gibeonites being thus given or dedicated to the service of the tabernacle, and of all the congregation, their posterity, after the building of the temple, were called *Nethinims* (that is, *Given.*)

(*) *Jebus.* This place was afterwards, in David's time, called Jerusalem.

The

The heavenly orbs obeyed, and stood unmoved at his command. This was a long day indeed; for never before or since did God honour man so much as to change the course of nature, and stop the motion of rolling luminaries.

Having received so remarkable a display of divine favour and concurrence, in vanquishing the foes of Israel, Joshua returned from the chase, and ordered the cave to be opened, where the five kings lay hid, he commanded them to be brought before him. Then calling for the officers of the army, he bade them set their feet upon the necks of those kings; which they did. This was not to insult over the wretched captives, but an emblematical prediction of their future success over the enemies of God's people: for thus, says Joshua, I will do to all that oppose you, Then commanding execution to be done upon them, he caused them to be hanged up on several trees until the evening; when he ordered them to be taken down, and cast into the cave where they had hid themselves, making their intended sanctuary their sepulchre.

Having totally routed the combined forces, Joshua proceeded to reduce the cities to the subjection of the Israelites. He marched first to Makedah; then to Libnah; from thence to Lachish, where he slew the king of Gezer, who came to the relief of Lachish. From Lachish he marched to Eglon, from Eglon to Hebron, and from Hebron to Debir. All which places he took by storm, and put the inhabitants, both kings and people to the sword, as God had commanded. Joshua having performed such great exploits, and conquered so many kings and nations in (*y*) one expedition through the assistance of the mighty God of Israel, returned with his victorious army to his camp at Gilgal.

The signal conquests of the Israelites spread a fame, and greatly alarmed the more distant nations, especially the Hazorites, whose king, thinking it in vain for the princes of Canaan to encounter singly with so puissant and victorious an army, sent to Jobah, king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to all the neighbouring princes within reach, to invite them into a league, that with their united force they might drive the Israelites out of the land they had conquered.

Enraged at the continual success of the Israelites, the different powers, next campaign, raised a very numerous army to engage Joshua; whose God, to chastise the pride and presumption of his enemies, and to engage Joshua; whose God, to chastise the pride and presumption of his enemies, and to encourage his General, bade him not to fear them; *For to-morrow*, says he, *I will deliver them into the hands of Israel, and thou shalt disable their horses and burn their chariots.*

Relying on the strength of their numbers, the combined potentates vainly flattered themselves they should intimidate

(*y*) *One Expedition.* All these great atchievements are by some Chronologers reckoned to have been performed in the first year of Joshua's government, and placed in the year of the world, 2553.

timidate the general of the Israelites; but Joshua, in pursuance of the encouragement and instructions God had given him, without delay took the field, marched directly towards the enemy, and fell so suddenly upon them, that he immediately routed them, and in the pursuit put all to the sword. And because Jabin, the king of Hazor had been the head of the confederacy, he caused that city to be burnt to the ground; but all the other cities, whose inhabitants were slain in the action, he left standing, and gave the cattle and plunder of them to the soldiers. Thus did Joshua by degrees recover all the land of Canaan, subduing the people that possessed it, and slaying all their kings, one and thirty in number, with the Anakims or Giants, of whom he left none remaining, except in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. And now Joshua began to think of a settlement, which he did, by dividing the land beyond Jordan, among the nine tribes and half; who being settled in their several possessions, Joshua set up the tabernacle at Shiloh.

Then calling the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and acknowledging that they had faithfully kept their covenant in accompanying their brethren, and helping them to subdue their enemies, he kindly dismissed them, advising them to continue stedfast in their duty to God; and giving them his blessing, they returned to their families, loaded with spoils, consisting of gold, brass, iron, raiment, and a great quantity of cattle, which was their share of the plunder taken from the enemy, during the war.

These two tribes and half, being safely arrived on the borders of Jordan, erected an altar, not for any religious use, but as a memorial to succeeding ages, that though they were parted from their brethren by Jordan, yet they were all of one extraction and religion, and had an equal right to the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, and the worship performed there.

This had like to have proved of fatal consequence, and occasioned a war between them, and the other tribes; to whom the matter being either misrepresented or they mis-apprehending it, and suspecting their brethren on the other side of Jordan were ready to revolt from God and them, they unanimously assembled their forces at Shiloh, in order to declare war against them.

But before they proceeded to extremities, they chose ten princes, one out of each tribe; and they, the chiefs of their families, with Phineas and Eleazar, were sent away to enquire into the cause of this new-erected altar. On their arrival, they accosted them in very severe terms, charging them with rebellion against the Lord. To aggravate the matter farther, they put them in mind of the sin of Peor; and to let them see that it was not out of an officious busy temper or humour, that they came to them thus, but out of a generous concern for the whole people, they said, *If you thus rebel against the Lord, he will soon be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.*

This

This they enforced by the late instance of Achan. And to prevent any objection, and take from them all pretence of excuse or defence, they added, *If ye have done this from any apprehenſion, that the land ye poſſeſs on that ſide Jordan is unclean, or leſs holy than ours, becauſe the Tabernacle is on our ſide the river, return and ſettle among us, where the Tabernacle reſteth; but by no means rebel againſt the Lord, nor us, in building you an altar beſides the altar of the Lord.*

The Reubenites, Gadites and Manassites, were very much concerned at the ill opinion their brethren entertained of them. But well knowing their own innocency, with a solemn appeal to God returned answer to Phineas and his companions in this manner:

The Lord of the whole world, and all Iſrael, ſhall know how innocent we are of the rebellion with which you charge us.

If we have ſet up an altar in oppoſition to the Lord's altar, let him judge and puniſh us; neither do ye ſhew us any favour. But when ye ſhall know the truth, you will find what we have done was to prevent what you fear. For we conſidered that in time to come, your children might ſay unto our children, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Iſrael?

For ſince the Lord hath made Jordan a border and bound between us and you, you have no part in the Lord: that is, you do not belong to the congregation of the Lord, nor have any right to come before his tabernacle, nor to offer upon his altar; and ſo your children might be an occaſion to our children to turn rebels to the Lord.

Therefore we agreed to build an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for ſacrifice, but to be a witneſs between you and us, and our generations after us; that when we ſhould come to perform ſervice to the Lord with our burnt-offering and ſacrifice before him, if your children ſhould ſay unto ours Ye have no part in the Lord; our children might reply, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not to ſacrifice upon, but to be a witneſs between us and you. But as to the matter you charge us with, God forbid that we ſhould rebel againſt the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, meat offerings, or ſacrifices, beſides the altar of our God, that is before his tabernacle.

Phineas, and the princes of the people that were with him, struck with this just vindication of the Reubenites, and the rest, applauded them for it, and Phineas, to testify his sense and approbation of their innocence, assured them that he esteemed the proof they had given of it, as a token of their regard to God, and of his presence with them. Then taking leave of their brethren, they returned in triumph to the Israelites at Shiloh, who with infinite pleasure and joy received the good tidings of their brethren's innocence, and of their pious care and zeal to preserve their posterity in the fear and service of the

true God: and changing their angry thoughts of war into those of tenderness and peace, they blessed God for the happy issue of this dangerous affair. As for the Reubenites and their brethren, to prevent any future jealousy or suspicion of their intentions, they called the altar which they had built ED, which signifies a witness, adding this as the reason of the name, *For it shall be a witness between us and our brethren, the other tribes of Israel, that the Lord is God.* Intimating by this, that though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren, yet both had but one God, who was the God of Israel.

The great warrior of Israel having obtained a complete victory over his enemies, enjoyed the fruits of his labour in the agreeable repose of a settled peace, and at last being grown old, and foreseeing his end to be near at hand, he caused all Israel to be assembled; to whom he thus briefly enumerated the blessings God had bestowed on their ancestors and themselves: *Your fathers dwelt on the other side of Jordan, from whence the Lord brought Abraham, his servant, to this happy country, where he blessed his old age with a son, and that son with two others, Jacob and Esau. Esau possessed mount Seir; but Jacob and his family went into Egypt; where their posterity remained under slavish bondage, till God sent Moses and Aaron to deliver them, You cannot be ignorant of the wonders God wrought by their hands, when he plagued Egypt for their sakes, nor of his care in protecting them against the Amorites. Yourselves have lately seen confederate nations fall before you, and the way to an easy victory for you over all you enemies. And now at last he hath left you in quiet possession of a land that aboundeth with all manner of plenty; whose happy soil, without your labour yields the comfortable product of all that nature can give. In recompense for all this, your great protector and benefactor requires only an exact obedience to his laws.* Then solemnly declaring, *That what course soever the rest should take, he and his house would* * *serve the Lord;* and exhorting them to a faithful observance of the laws of God, he invited them to renew their covenant with God. Which having done in very ample and significant terms, he wrote the words of their covenant in the book of the Law of God. Then setting up a great stone under an oak by the sanctuary of the Lord, he bade the people take notice, That that very stone should be a witness to them, to put them in mind of the covenant which they had made, to prevent them hereafter from denying their God.

Soon after this, Joshua being arrived

* *Serve the Lord.* Joshua, having seen all the wonderful works of God in Egypt and at the Red Sea, and the people having been witnesses of those recently done, he appeals to them whether Jehovah was not the proper object of worship. And, as a leader in Israel and pattern, he set before them his own choice and the strength of his love to the Lord God of Israel; *as for him and his house they would serve the Lord:* A happy and honourable resolution, not only worthy to be followed by the master and head of every family, but it is their greatest honour and privilege in life.

rived at the hundred and tenth year of his age, died, and was buried in the border of his inheritance, in *Tinmath-Sera*, in mount Ephraim; which city, upon the division of the land amongst the tribes, the children of Israel by God's direction gave unto him, in token of gratitude for the many services and benefits they had received by his administration.

Much about the same time also died Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, whom they buried in a hill, which was given him in mount Ephraim, and which descended to Phineas his son, and successor in the priesthood.

The children of Israel being obliged by oath to carry Joseph's bones into Shechem, and there bury them in a parcel of ground which Jacob had formerly bought of the son of Hamor, the father of Shechem; which parcel of ground afterwards became the inheritance of Joseph's posterity.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

JUDAH AND SIMEON ARE CONTINUED BY GOD SUCCESSORS TO JOSHUA IN THE CONDUCT OF THE ISRAELITES. THEIR SUCCESS OVER THEIR ENEMIES. THEY ARE REBUKED BY AN ANGEL FOR THEIR NEGLECT OF THE DIVINE COMMAND. WICKEDNESS AND PUNISHMENT OF THE SUCCEEDING GENERATION. PIETY OF MICAH, IN RESTORING THE MONEY WHICH HIS MOTHER HAD, THROUGH A MISTAKEN ZEAL DEVOTED TO THE LORD.

THE (*d*) Israelites mindful of the advice of their deceased leader, and warned by the dreadful punishments that had been inflicted on the disobedience of their fore-fathers, presumed not to take any step at this critical juncture, without applying for the divine instruction; therefore as there were still remaining several Canaanitish kings unconquered, and who might be troublesome to them, they unanimously repaired to the oracle at *Shiloh*, to ask direction, who should go first up for them to fight the Canaanites?

The Lord gave this first post of honour to the tribe of Judah, with an assurance of victory. Whereupon they invited the tribe of Simeon, whose lot lay within theirs, to ac-

(*d*) *The Israelites.* After the death of Joshua, the Israelites were long without any king or sovereign. Every tribe, being governed by its Elders, chose its own commanders for war, and they by degrees subdued the rest of the inhabitants of the country, either destroying or making them tributaries.

The neighbouring kings made war on, and sometimes subdued them; but God from time to time raised some persons, who delivered them from their oppressions. In acknowledgment for which benefit the people appointed them their judges, that is, their supreme magistrates, to administer justice and govern them.

company

company them in this expedition; they promised them, if they would join forces with them now, they would do the like for them afterwards.

Simeon agreed; and taking the field they both attacked the cruel king of *Bezek*, who having fortified himself in the city, could not long hold out against victorious Israel; but seeing his heartless troops give way, quitted the place, and endeavoured by ignoble flight to save his life; but in vain. For the Israelites having taken the town, and put ten thousand of the people to the sword, they pursued *Adonibezek* the king; and having taken him, they cut off his thumbs and great toes.

This execution drew from the tyrant an acknowledgment of the justice of God upon him; for he confessed he had cut off the thumbs and great toes of no less than seventy kings, whom in this mangled condition, he made to gather their meat like dogs under his table.

The old city (*e*) Jebus, with its territories, lay in two parts; of which one part fell to the lot of Judah, the other, to that of Benjamin.

Judah soon over-run that part of it that belonged to him; and having put the inhabitants to the sword, set the place on fire. Hither it was they brought the captive king Adonibezek, where he died.

The next march of the Israelites was against the Canaanites, that dwelt to the southward of the mountains, and in the plains; where, having taken Hebron, they marched to attack Debir, which was a part of Caleb's portion, but possessed by the Canaanites.

This being Caleb's property, notwithstanding his great age, he resolved to storm the place; and to encourage his men the more in this brave attempt, he made proclamation in his camp, that he would give *Achsah*, his daughter, to the brave hero, who should attack and take the town.

The hopes of this beautiful prize raised in all the youth a generous emulation, and spurred them on to love and glory: but none came near the brave (*f*) *Othniel*, whose conquering sword at the head of his party hewed down all before him, and paved the way to victory. In short, he won the place, and with it the fair prize.

Othniel's gallantry being thus nobly rewarded by Caleb, the beauteous Achsah thinking herself not a sufficient gratuity for the service of her valiant hero, put him upon asking of her father a parcel of land which lay commodiously by their estate.

Othniel thinking his service already over-paid, seemed backward in the request; therefore Achsah addressing

(*e*) *Jebus.* This city was one of the most ancient in the world, and *Josephus* says that it was the residence of Melchizedec to whom Abraham paid tithes. It is in Judges, called Jerusalem, which name it had not till long after the Israelites had sacked and burnt it; it was rebuilt again, and afterwards made the metropolis of the whole kingdom.

(*f*) *Othniel.* He was somewhat of kin to Caleb, being, as *Tremellius* and *Junius* say, of the posterity of Kenaz; from whom Caleb being descended, was therefore called the Kenezite.

herself

herself to her father Caleb, desired him in general terms to give her a blessing, but more particularly she thus applied to him; *Thou haſt already given me a pleaſant eſtate in the ſouth part of the country; but it is hot and dry, and likely to prove barren; give me I pray thee this parcel of land, which is well watered.* Upon which, the generous parent granted her request, giving her the upper and lower springs.

Old Caleb, though advanced beyond his eighty-fifth year retained his strength and power both of body and mind, pursued his success with undaunted resolution, and took Hebron, as has been already said, with other places, expelling the gigantic race of *Anak;* but the inhabitants of the valley kept their ground, being a hardy people, and well provided with warlike ammunition, such as iron chariots, &c.

Those of Joseph's family, that went up against Bethel, did by the assistance of the Lord prevail; for sending out spies to discover the city, they seeing a man come out of it, seized him, and promised him mercy, if he would shew them the avenues to it.

The man, to save his life, gave them the best information he could; by which they so well succeeded, that having given notice to the rest of their forces to join them, they entered the town, and put the inhabitants to the sword, except the man that had discovered the entrance, with his family.

The rest of the tribes took possession of the land respectively, and allotted them for an inheritance, but did not destroy the inhabitants, contenting themselves with making them tributary, and suffering them to dwell promiscuously amongst them.

The children of Dan were so unsuccessful against the Amorites, that they were forced to quit the plains, and retire to the mountainous parts of the country, where they were kept penned up for a time.

But the rest of the Israelites, who had been successful against the Canaanites and Amorites, fell into a great error; for, either through lenity or covetousness, not making the right use of their victories, as they were expressly commanded by God, they not only permitted them to live, but encouraged them to trade and deal with them.

This disobedience and neglect of the divine precept, not only proved a snare to them, but likewise incensed God against them; who, to make them sensible of their folly, sent an angel (*k*) to remind them of the many favours he had bestowed upon them, in their deliverance out of Egypt, and of their being brought into that good land; and of his faithfulness in keeping his covenant with them, which they had so unfaithfully violated; by which ingratitude they had provoked God to withdraw his help and protection from them.

This severe reprimand so strongly impressed the people, with a sense of their sin, that they fell into a general weeping, deplored the wretchedness

(*k*) *Angel.* That is, a messenger, for so the word implies.

of their condition, and offered sacrifice to the Lord, to appease his wrath, calling the name of the place where they received this reproof *Bochim*, which signifies weepers.

* But scarce were their tears wiped off at Bochin, when they, forsaking the Lord God of their fathers, fell into open idolatry, worshipping (*l*) *Baal* and *Aſhteroth*, the idols of the Heathens; which so provoked the Lord, that he often suffered them to be taken and enslaved by their enemies.

But that which brought these calamities upon them, was their favouring those enemies with whom God had forbid all manner of correspondence. For besides, that it was expressly forbidden in the law, Joshua, but just before his death, had particularly warned them of the danger they would fall into, if they should entertain any familiarity with those nations that God had doomed to destruction.

And above all things, he laid a most strict charge on them to take care, that they did not marry with them, which he knew would naturally lead them to idolatry. Yet, notwithstanding they knew all this, they so far indulged themselves in a loose conversation, with the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebuzites; that forgetting the obligation they laid under, they made inter-marriages with them; the immediate consequence of which was, that they served their Gods.

Such aggravated offences so displeased the most high God, the mighty deliverer of Israel, that he withheld all his powerful assistance, and behold the consequence: for *Chuſhanriſhathaim*, king of Mesopotamia, invading them, made an easy conquest of them, and inslaved them for eight years. During which time of servitude, the Israelites coming to a sense and acknowledgment of their transgressions, and crying to the Lord for help, he raised up a deliverer for them. This was the brave Othniel, who, in recompense of his valour, had married Caleb's daughter. This hero, being divinely (*p*) inspired, undertook the deliverance of the Israelites, defeated Chushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; and by this victory over the Syrians, procured to the Israelites a peace of forty years; during which time Othniel governed Israel, and was the first of those we call judges.

Plenty and ease under the admini-

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* Mention was made in *Joſh.* xxiv. 31. that the people of *Iſrael ſerved the Lord all the days of Joſhua, and all the days of the Elders that out lived Joſhua*, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he wrought for Israel. But when that generation was dead, and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim, that is, the less, or Tutelar Gods, so called, of the several nations about them.

(*l*) *Baal and Aſhteroth.* That is Idols or Gods of the Heathens: for by Baal or Baalim, were signified all the Male Gods, as the Females were by Ashteroth, which was the idol of the Zidonians, represented in the form of a sheep.

(*p*) *Inſpired.* All virtuous qualities, whether natural or supernatural, are in the Holy Scripture called the *Spirit of the Lord.* Thus Bezaleel, in *Exodus*, is said to be *filled with the Spirit of God*, when he was appointed to build the tabernacle. The same is said of Gideon, Sampson, Saul, and others.

stration

stration of Othniel, rendered the children of Israel secure and wanton, who, ungratefully forgetting the former favours and benefits God had bestowed upon them, lapsed into their former sins of apostacy and corruption in religion; of which the following (*r*) stories are notorious instances.

There was about this time a devout woman of the tribe of Dan, who, through a mistaken zeal, had dedicated a sum of money to the Lord, and laid it by, intending her son should make with it an idol. Her son, whose name was *Micah*, finding the money, but not knowing to what use his mother had devoted it, took it for himself. She missing the money, and not suspecting her son, did in his presence curse the sacrilegious thief; which so frighted the son, that he confessed the fact, and restored it to her, being in all eleven hundred shekels of silver.

The mother having received her money again, took two hundred shekels of it, and gave them to a founder to make an idol; which being done, she placed it in the house of her son's Gods; for he made a Teraphim and an Ephod, and (*u*) consecrated one of his sons to be his priest for a while, till he could procure a Levite, which was not long first: for soon after, a certain young man, that was a Levite, and had dwelt some time at Bethlehem-Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, came in his way to Micah's house in Mount Ephraim.

Micah, glad of this opportunity, invited the young Levite to dwell with him, and be to him a (*w*) father and a priest, offering him for his wages ten shekels of silver by the year, his diet, and two suits of apparel, one for common wearing, and the other to officiate in.

The Levite liking the terms, closed with Micah, and became one of his family. On the other hand, Micah, was as much pleased in the hopes and confidence that the Lord would prosper him, because he had gotten a (*x*) Levite to be his priest.

CHAP.

(*r*) *Stories.* It is plain from the text, that these things happened when *there was no king* (that is, *Ruler*;) for, properly speaking, there had been hitherto no king in Israel; *but that every man did that which was right in his own eyes:*

(*u*) *Consecrated.* Every thing in the Jewish law was typical of Christ, and as the people were strictly forbidden to worship any where but at the tabernacle or temple, this was an act of idolatry.

(*w*) *Father.* The priest was called a father for reverence sake, being indeed a spiritual father to the laity, as having care of their souls, and charge of the holy things. Thus are preceptors called fathers to their pupils, senators fathers to the citizens, princes fathers of their countries, &c.

(*x*) *Levite.* Who this young Levite was, is hard to say. He is called Jonathan, the son of Gershom, of the tribe of Manasseh.

CHAP. V.

THE DANITES SEND OUT A DETACHMENT IN QUEST OF AN INHERITANCE. THEY TAKE POSSESSION OF LAISH, ARE GUILTY OF IDOLATRY. JUDGMENT INFLICTED ON THE LEVITE'S CONCUBINE. METHOD OF RESENTMENT SHEWN BY THE LEVITE FOR THE INHOSPITABLE TREATMENT HE HAD RECEIVED. HE REPRESENTS HIS WRONGS IN AN ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE. THEIR DECREE IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE SAME. THE BENJAMITES ARE EXAMINED CONCERNING THE OUTRAGE. WITHSTAND THE ISRAELITES SOME TIME, BUT ARE AT LENGTH DESTROYED.

ABOUT the same time, some of the tribe of Dan, finding the lot, which fell to them upon the division of the land in (y) Joshua's time, too little for them, and they not enjoying all that neither (for the Amorites, as has been already said, would not suffer them to possess the valley, which was the best and richest part, but forced them up into the mountains) they were fain to seek out more room to enlarge their quarters. Whereupon, choosing out five men of courage, they sent them to take a view of the country. These spies in their travels light upon Micah's house, where they were entertained; and knowing the young Levite by his voice, they asked him how he came thither, and what business he had there?

He told them what agreement Micah had made with him, and that he was Micah's priest.

When they heard this, they desired him to ask counsel of God, that they might know whether their journey would be prosperous or no?

Encouraged by the Levite, they went on till they came to Laish; where, observing the people lived very secure and careless, without any sort of discipline or government, they concluded it would be no difficult matter to conquer them, and take possession of the place. And with this report they returned to their friends, giving them an account that the land abounded with all necessaries for life.

Availing themselves of the undisciplined state of these people, the tribe of Dan armed a party of six hundred men, and sent them to take possession of the city of Laish.

These marching through mount Ephraim, came in their way by Micah's house, where making a halt, the five spies, who were guides to this party, and had been there before, acquainted the rest, that there were in that house an Ephod and Teraphim, and a graven and molten Image, desiring them to consider, whether they had best to tarry there, to ask counsel of the Lord, concerning the success of their enterprize, or take the Ephod and images with them, to consult upon all occasions.

The last seemed most expedient; for the five spies, that were the guides, leaving the party at the gates, went into the house. Micah being from

(y) *Joshua's.* See Josh. xix. 47.

home,

home, they saluted the Levite, whom they sent to the gate to talk with the Danites; and whilst they entertained him without, the guides, having been there before, and knowing the rooms of the house, plundered it of the Ephod, the Teraphim, and other Images, and brought them to their brethren at the gate.

The priest seeing this, was amazed at the boldness of the attempt; and asked them, what they meant by it? they bade him be silent, and consider, whether it were better for him to be a priest to a single family, or a whole tribe in Israel?

This advantageous offer soon gain'd the young priest to their side, who joined with them, and went off with the plunder.

Micah, incensed and alarmed at the loss of his priest and Gods, gathered as many friends as he could, and pursued the Danites. But they were a long way from his house before he could overtake them: at length, coming within view of them, some of the Danite soldiers in the rear, heard them make an out-cry; and facing about, asked Micah why he made such an out-cry. He told them they had robbed him. Upon which the Danites advised him to be silent; for if they provoked the rest of the party, it would cost them their lives. Micah finding himself over-matched, was forced to put up with the wrong, and returned home without either Gods or priest.

Having thus affrighted Micah's party from the pursuit, the Danites continued their march unmolested, and speedily arrived at Laish, and finding the people quiet and secure, they set the city on fire, and, surprising the inhabitants, who were busy in putting out the fire; they put them all to the sword. Afterwards rebuilding the city, they called it Dan, after the name of their father; and settling there, they set up Micah's graven image which they had stolen from him; and making the young Levite *Jonathan* the priest, he and his sons continued to officiate as priests to the tribe of Dan all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh, until the captivity of the land, which is reckoned to be till the ark in Eli's time was taken by the Philistines, about three hundred years after this.

From this instance, the depravity of the Israelites in point of religious principles, is as notorious as their dissolution of morals is evident from the following.

A Levite that dwelt on the side of mount Ephraim having taken a wife out of Bethlehem-Judah, she proved a lewd woman, and either through fear or shame left her husband, and ran home to her father at Bethlehem-Judah, where she tarried four months. In which time her husband, having somewhat digested the injury, went at the four months end to her father's, with an intent to be reconciled to her, and bring her home with him; in order to which, he took with him a servant and a couple of asses.

Being arrived at her father's house, he was received with great joy, and entertained for three days. At the importunity of the father, he stayed

the fourth day, and was kept till the afternoon the next day; but the Levite resolving to be gone, took his leave, and set out with his wife and servant.

By the time they were got as far as Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant fearing to be benighted, desired his master to put in there. But the place not being fully possessed and inhabited by Israelites, he endeavoured to reach Gibeah, whither they arrived at sun-set; and sitting down in the street, as the custom of travellers then was, they waited to see who would invite them to a lodging.

After long waiting, an old man coming from his work out of the field, and seeing strangers sitting in the street, went up and saluted them, asked whence they came, and whither they were travelling? The Levite told him, and complained of the incivility of the people, none having invited him to a lodging though he had his own provisions with him.

The hospitable old man, who was of mount Ephraim, though he dwelt at Gibeah, courteously invited them to lodge in his house, where he entertained them very frankly.

Whilst they were at supper, the men of the city, having observed where they went in, came to the house, and knocking with great violence at the door, demanding the master of the house to deliver the man that came in there that they might (z) know him.

The good old man, to prevent danger to his guests, ventured amongst the tumultuous rabble to appease them, offering them his only daughter, who was a virgin, and the Levites concubine, to use at their pleasure, provided they would not offer any violence to his guest.

This would not do; whereupon the Levite, seeing them so outrageous, to save himself, turned his (a) concubine out amongst them, who abused her all night, not letting her go till the break of day. And when she returned to the house where her Lord lay, fell down dead at the door, her hands laying upon the threshold.

The Levite opening the door, and seeing her lay there, concluded she was asleep, and therefore bade her get up, that they might be going. But when he perceived she was dead, he took her up; and making no complaint there, laid her upon one of the asses, and hastened home as fast as he could.

He having now time to meditate a revenge suitable to the affront, which he in this horrid manner executed; he divided the dead concubine into twelve pieces, and sent to every tribe a piece, through the whole coasts of Israel, with an account of the barbarous and inhospitable treatment he had met with at Gibeah; that so the whole family of Israel in general, be-

(z) *Know him.* This was a crime of so horrid a nature, and attended with so many aggravating circumstances, that profane history does not furnish us with any thing like it.

(a) *Concubine.* She is sometimes called wife, but oftener concubine.

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ing made sensible of the wrong done him and his concubine, might join in revenging it.

This procedure of the Levite is indeed shocking to humanity, though it tended to shew his strong sense of the injury and disgrace he had sustained, as well as impress deep convictions of their guilt upon the Israelites, who, upon sight of each piece of the divided concubine, did unanimously agree, that there never was such a deed done or seen since the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt.

And to acquit themselves of the guilt of so wicked a fact, the whole congregation of Israel met at Mispeh, that they might there examine the business before the Lord; where demanding of the Levite an account of the whole matter, he thus in short summed it up to them. *I came with my concubine to Gibeah, which belonged to Benjamin, to lodge: but the men of Gibeah beset the house where I was, with a design to murder me: and my concubine they have forced, that she is dead; by which they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel.*

Whereupon I took my concubine home, and having cut her into pieces, I sent her throughout all the inheritance of Israel.

Now ye, being sons of Israel, are concerned in this abuse as well as I. Therefore consider and advise what is to be done.

When the people had received this account of the matter, they were highly incensed against the men of Gibeah, and resolved not to return to their houses till they had brought the offenders to condign punishment. And that they might lose no time, agreed to draw ten men out of every hundred, an hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand, who should be employed to furnish the army with provisions and other necessaries.

On cool deliberation it was resolved by messengers, to demand of the Benjamites the delivery of the persons guilty of this breach of justice, in order that they might be brought to condign punishment.

But the Benjamites in contempt of their brethren, the Israelites, resolved to stand by the offenders, and muster'd up all their force to defend them.

The Israelitish army consisted of four hundred thousand able men: that of Benjamin but six and twenty thousand. A great disparity, and which shewed the latter desperate.

The Israelites, over-confident of their strength, and despising the Benjamites, who were so few, depending on the justice of their cause, never went to ask counsel of God (as in such emergencies they usually did) whether they should go to war with their brethren or no; but taking it for granted, to prevent any difference that might arise among the tribes about precedence in this expedition, they went up to the house of God only to know which tribe should lead the van, and the lot fell to Judah.

Upon this, the Israelitish army advanced and sat down before Gibeah; from whence the Benjamites made a brisk sally upon, cut off two and twenty thousand of them, and retreated to the town with very little loss. This unexpected disaster made the

Israelites

Israelites sensible of their neglect, in not enquiring of the Lord whether they ought to have undertaken this war or no. Wherefore, bewailing their misfortune in the last action, they ask counsel of the Lord (but in an irregular manner) who, to punish them for their presumption, bade them go, but promised them no success.

The heedless Israelites, taking this for an assurance of victory, drew up their army again before Gibeah, offering the Benjamites battle: who, being flushed with their former successes made another bold sally, and cut off eighteen thousand more of the Israelites.

The second defeat brought the Israelites to a sense of their former presumption and neglect: Wherefore, going up to the house of the Lord, they humbled themselves with weeping and fasting that day, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord.

And having thus regularly proceeded in their humiliation, they again enquired of the Lord whether they should attack the Benjamites, or forbear: For at this time the ark of the covenant of God was in Shiloh, and (*b*) Phineas was priest. And now the Lord, having sufficiently corrected the confidence of the Israelites, not only gave them commission to go against the Benjamites, but assured them of victory.

Being thus promised the assistance of an Almighty arm, and encouraged with the divine assurance of success, the Israelites prepared a third time to attack the Benjamites; and to make their victory more secure, they laid an ambuscade in the meadows behind Gibeah, that, when the fight was begun, the Israelites by a feigned flight drawing the Benjamites from the city, those that lay in ambuscade should seize the city, and set it on fire, as a signal to the main body of the Israelitish army to rally and renew the fight.

Having thus concerted the necessary military operations, ten thousand choice troops of the Israelites appeared before Gibeah; which the Benjamites seeing, sallied out of the town, and falling briskly upon them, killed about thirty of them. The Israelites then retiring, as if they were afraid, pretended to fly; and the Benjamites, supposing the day was their own, eagerly pursued them so far, that they were at a distance from the town sufficient to give the ambuscade an opportunity to seize the place, and set it on fire.

The main body of the Israelitish army seeing this, faced about, and charged furiously upon the Benjamites, who began to think of retreating to their city: but when by the smoak and flame they saw themselves circumvented, they took to the wilderness, thinking to secure themselves there: but in vain. For being inclosed by the main army, and the ambuscade, they were easily trodden down.

(*b*) *Phineas.* This passage in Judges (rejecting that Rabbinical dream, that Phineas lived three hundred years) shews plainly, that this story was transacted early in the times of the judges.

In

In this action and the pursuit, five and twenty thousand one hundred of the Benjamites were slain, and a thousand more having been destroyed in other actions, there remained but six hundred men of the Benjamites, who fled to the rock Rimmon, and hid themselves there; all the rest of that tribe, together with their towns and cattle, suffered military execution.

The heat of this action being over, the Israelites began to consider, how low a condition they had reduced the tribe of Benjamin to by this general slaughter, which afflicted them very much. And the rather, because upon the first engaging in this quarrel, they had rashly sworn, that no Israelite should give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite.

Upon this they repaired to the tabernacle where the ark was, and mourned all day, saying, *O Lord, why is this come to pass, that there should this day be one tribe wanting in Israel?*

Then getting up early the next morning, they built an altar there, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings unto the Lord. After which, applying themselves to find out some expedient to elude their rash oath, and save the sinking tribe, they recollected, that they had at first bound themselves by oath to put to death all those who should not appear with them at Mizpeh, and join in the common cause against the Benjamites.

Upon inquiry they found, that none came from Jabesh-Gilead to the assembly at the camp. Therefore sending twelve thousand of their best men to Jabesh-Gilead, they commanded them to put man, woman and child to the sword, except such marriageable young women as were virgins, whom they were to bring with them to the camp.

These troops, having done execution on Jabesh-Gilead, as they were commanded, brought away with them four hundred virgins to the Israelites; who immediately sent heralds to the rock Rimmon to treat with the few remaining Benjamites, offering them peace, and inviting them to return.

The poor Benjamites, gladly embraced the offer; and coming to the camp, the Israelites bestowed on them the Gileadite virgins for wives. But the Benjamites, being six hundred in number, there was not for every man one. Upon which they bethought them of another expedient to supply this deficiency.

Once a year there was a solemn feast held at Shiloh, to which the young maidens of Shiloh used to come and dance there. The Israelites therefore directed the Benjamites, that wanted wives, to lie in wait in the vineyards, at the time of the feast, and when they should see the Shiloh damsels come to dance, they should seize every man one for his wife, and carry them away into their own country, promising them, that if any of the relations of the damsels should complain, they should skreen them from danger.

The Benjamites pursued their instructions; and watching their opportunity, took every one his dam-

sel, and carried them off to their own inheritance: where, repairing their cities, they settled again, and in time recruited their tribe.

CHAP. VI.

THE ISRAELITES ARE AGAIN PUNISHED FOR THEIR IMPIETY. DELIVERED FROM THEIR ENEMIES ON THEIR REPENTANCE AND SUBMISSION. DEBORAH AND BARAK ESPOUSE THEIR CAUSE. VARIOUS INSTANCES OF THE REVOLT OF ISRAEL, AND THEIR CONSEQUENT PUNISHMENT. TOGETHER WITH THE INTERPOSITION OF PROVIDENCE IN THEIR BEHALF, ON THEIR RETURN TO THE LORD.

THESE civil and intestine quarels, among the tribes, being thus reconciled, the Israelites did not long enjoy peace; for continuing to provoke God by their profaneness and irregularities, he again chastised them by their enemies. The most powerful of whom was *Eglon*, king of Moab. Him God raised up to be a scourge, who otherwise had neither strength nor courage to attack Israel.

But being designed by the Almighty to be the instrument of his vengeance, Eglon armed the Ammonites and Amalekites, and fell upon the Israelites, whom he defeated, and possessed himself of the city of palm-trees.

And as an aggravation of their offence, in so suddenly transgressing, after their late deliverance from bondage, God enlarged their punishment, for their servitude was now advanced from eight years to eighteen, which was the space of time they served Moab.

But when the Israelites, through a sense of their misery, addressed themselves to their God, he raised them another deliverer in the person of *Ehud*, the son of *Gera*, a left-handed man, by reason of a lameness in his right hand.

Ehud was a wise and politic man, and having observed the weakness of the Israelites by their eighteen years slavery, and the low condition of the Benjamites, that they were not able by open war to attempt any thing against their oppressors, he contrived first to take off Eglon privately, knowing it would be much easier to deal with the Moabites, when they should be in confusion for want of a leader, than while they had their king at the head of them.

To carry on this the more plausibly, he repaired to the Moabitish court, where, under pretence of delivering a present to the king from his servants the children of Israel, he was admitted into the king's presence. When he had delivered the present, and dismissed his servants that brought it, he returning to the king told him he had a private message to him.

The king bid him be silent till the company were gone; who being withdrawn, Ehud approached, and told the king he had a message to him from *(f)* God.

(f) God. By which is meant that he had a commission to him from Elohim his God; for the Heathens considered the God of the Israelites in the same light as their own idols.

At

At that word, Eglon, in reverence to the name of God, arose from his seat, which Ehud taking the advantage of, stabbed him in the belly with a dagger, which he had concealed under his cloaths, so forcibly, that he thrust the dagger, haft and all, into his belly; and the king being a very fat man, the fat of his belly closed over the dagger, so that he could not draw it out.

Ehud seeing him dead left him wallowing in his blood, and shutting the door after him made the best of his way home.

After the departure of Ehud, the servants of Eglon returned on their duty to the king, but finding the door locked they supposed he had a mind to retire, and therefore withdrew; but after long waiting, and finding the door still shut, they took a key and opened it, and to their great surprize found their king dead upon the ground.

This long delay of theirs gave Ehud a fair opportunity to escape; which he improved by his speed; and coming to Mount Ephraim, he blew a trumpet, at which signal the Israelites flocked to him, to whom he related what he had done, and bid them follow him; for God (said he) hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands.

They readily obeyed him as their leader, and securing the fords of Moab, towards Jordan, suffered not a man to pass over; but falling couragiously upon the Moabites, whilst they were in that consternation for the death of their king, and want of a leader, and slew about ten thousand of the chief of them, at the same time delivering Israel, and subduing Moab.

Ehud deceased, the God of Israel raised his chosen people another deliverer, in the person of *Samgar*, the son of Anath, a strong and valiant man: who, when the Philistines in another quarter invaded Issrael, with no better weapon than an ox-goad, slew six hundred of the Philistines, and delivered them from all dangerous neighbours, that were borderers on that side. After which Israel enjoyed a peace of eight years.

In which time of liberty and ease, they grew wanton and forgetful of their former servitude; which neglect and ingratitude of theirs provoked God to raise up other instruments for their correction; the chief of which was Jabin, who assuming to himself the title of the king of Canaan reigned in Hazor.

He was a powerful prince, well stored with all warlike ammunition, having nine hundred chariots armed with iron, and his subjects a warlike people.

This king lorded it over the oppressed Israelites with great severity for twenty years; God upon the repetition and aggravation of their transgressions increased their punishment. And so cruel were the people to them, that they durst not travel the common roads upon their ordinary occasions, but were forced to seek by-ways to avoid their enemies, so that their highways were disused: neither could they in safety dwell in their villages, being attacked by their archers, if they went but

out

out to draw water; nay, so servile was their condition, that they were not suffered to keep any arms.

Having been thus severely punished for their transgressions by a subjection to their cruel and inveterate foes, God was pleased at last to remember mercy; and seeing their sufferings had brought them to a sense of their sins, he found out a way to deliver them, beyond what they could imagine or expect. For it is very much to be suspected, that at this time the Israelites, by the severity of their servitude, were so degenerated and dispirited, that the sex, which boasts itself created for empire, could not at that time furnish their present exigencies with a man fit to be invested with sovereign power. For which reason, in all probability, *Deborah* the wife of *Lapidoth*, is said to have judged Israel at that time.

She was a prophetess, and the Israelites used to come to her for judgment. To this great prophetess the Lord communicated his thoughts of delivering his people, and by his spirit directed her to send for Barak, the son of Abinoam, a brave young prince of the tribe of Naphtali.

He came, and she acquainted him that it was the pleasure of the Lord, that he should get together ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali, and Zebulon, and lead them towards mount Tabor; and, to encourage him, she told him in the name of the Lord, that Sisera, general of Jabin's army, with his army and chariots, should fall into his hands.

Barak considering the inequality of their forces, and the greatness of the enterprize, and thinking it necessary to have the prophetess with him, to consult upon all occasions, as well as to encourage his men, told her, if she would go with him, he would go; but not else.

The undaunted prophetess consented to accompany him; but pleasantly told him for his diffidence, that this expedition should not be for his honour; for Sisera the general, should fall into the hands of a woman.

Departing together for Kadesh, which was Barak's residence, he soon listed ten thousand volunteers in Zebulon and Naphtali, and led them to mount Tabor, the prophetess still accompanying him.

Such a number of distressed people being got together, it soon began to be rumoured about the country; and notice being giving to Sisera, of this insurrection, he mustered up all his force to suppress them, taking with him his nine hundred chariots of iron, and down he marched to the river Kishon. Which the courageous Deborah seeing, being divinely inspired, gave signal to the battle; saying to Barak, *up, for this is the day, in which the Lord hath delivered Sifera into thine hand.*

Barak upon this, marched down the mountain Tabor, and fell upon Sisera in the valley by the river; whose army God struck with such terror, by driving storms of rain and hail in their faces, that they could not stand before the Israelites: who pursuing them, put them all to the sword, except the general Sisera, who, not daring to trust to his chariot, took to his

his heels and fled, till he came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the (g) Kenite, who dwelt in that country, which was at peace with king Jabin.

Jael seeing Sisera coming, went out to meet him, and invited him to come in. He glad of the opportunity went in confidently, not suspecting any danger from her, whose husband was his master's ally.

But his security proved fatal to him, for being extremely thirsty, through the heat and fatigue of the day, he entreated Jael to give him a little water to drink; instead of which, she gave him as much milk as he cared for: and having allayed his thrist, he directed her, that if any body should come to enquire after him, she should not own he was there. And now thinking himself safe, he laid down upon the floor to sleep, Jael very officiously covered him with a carpet; where he had not layed long before he fell fast asleep.

When Jael perceived he was thus secure, she took a hammer, and a long nail, or tent-pin, and pitching it to the temples of his head, she struck it with such force, that it pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground: after which she cut off his head, and then left him.

After this, she went to the door of the tent, and saw Barak coming in pursuit of Sisera, whom she went out to meet, and inviting him in, told him, she could shew him the man he sought for; which she accordingly did.

Thus did the Almighty exert his power, in defence of his people Israel, and caused them to subdue Jabin, king of Caanan, whom they never left fighting with, till they had quite destroyed him.

Upon this victory the heroine Deborah, and her valiant general Barak, sung a triumphant *song.

CHAP. VII.

A FAMINE RAGES IN ISRAEL. MANY DEPART INTO A FOREIGN LAND: PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF NAOMI AND RUTH. THE ISRAELITES AFTER THE DEATH OF DEBORAH AND BARAK REVOLT FROM GOD, BUT, ON THEIR RETURN, GIDEON IS RAISED AS A DELIVERER.

PEACE and quiet at length succeeded war and tumults. But the Israelites growing supine, by an alteration of their circumstances, again provoked their God, by falling into their former transgressions, he took them more immediately into his own hands, and chastised their presumption and ingratitude with a severe famine; which raging furiously among the Israelites, many of them were forced to quit there habitations, and seek for food in a foreign land.

(g) *Kenite.* These Kenites, though they were proselytes, and worshipped the true God, according to the Mosaic law, yet being strangers by birth, and not of the promised seed, and so not pretending a right or title to the land of Caanan, they held it best policy in those troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace as well as they could both with the Israelites and Canaanites. Upon this foot it was that there was a peace between K. Jabin and the house of Heber the Kenite; and that gave confidence to Sisera in his distress to fly to Heber's tent for protection.

* See *Judges* chap. v.

Among the rest, one Elimelech of Bethlehem-Judah, a man of condition and family, removed with his wife Naomi, and his two sons *Mahlon* and *Chilion*, to the country of Moab, where Elimelech soon quitted this life.

After his death, his two sons, not strictly observing the law of God, took each of them a wife of the women of Moab, of base condition. The name of Chilion's wife was Orphah, and the name of Mahlon's Ruth. With these they lived about ten years, when Chilion and Mahlon died both childless.

The unhappy Naomi, thus deprived of her husband and children, and left in a strange country, could with no satisfaction stay longer in a place, where she had lost all the external comforts of life. But being informed that the famine was over in Israel, she resolved to return to her own country; and accordingly set forward for Judah, accompanied with her two daughters-in-law.

In the course of their journey, Naomi thinking it hard to deprive her daughters of the society and converse of their relatives, persuaded them to go back; and to shew that her advice arose not from any disgust, but from mere pity, gave them this affectionate blessing, *the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have done to me and mine; and grant that ye may marry again to your content, and enjoy a happy settlement.*

Then giving to each a parting kiss, they in tears pressed her to accept of their company. She endeavoured to dissuade them, by urging, that if they stayed in their own country they might marry again, which they could not propose, if they went with her.

At last, her importunity prevailed with Orphah, who with tears taking her leave of her mother-in-law, turned back to Moab. But no persuasion could prevail with Ruth, who with the most pressing instances urged Naomi to take her along with her; assuring her, that nothing should part them, but the God she served should be her God.

Naomi seeing the pious resolution of her daughter Ruth, pressed her no more to return: so they both went on to Bethlehem.

Naomi being arrived at Bethlehem, where she had lived in good repute; her return was generally taken notice of, and her old neighbours came to congratulate her upon her arrival in her own country.

It was now the beginning of barley-harvest (which usually was in the first month with them) when Naomi returned to Bethlehem. And Ruth the Moabitess being an industrious woman, desired Naomi to give her leave to go into the field to glean some corn. The mother consented, and she happened to go into a field belonging to Boaz, a very wealthy person of the family of Elimelech, and nearly related to him; and there she gleaned after the reapers. She had not been long there, before Boaz himself came into the field to look after his workmen; and having saluted them in a very devout manner, he took notice of Ruth, and asked his steward who she was? he told him, she was a Moabitish damsel that accompanied

companied Naomi in her return home from the country of Moab, and that she had asked leave to glean after the reapers.

Boaz, having been acquainted with her dutiful and affectionate behaviour to her mother-in-law, his kinswoman, encouraged her to glean in his ground, and to keep with his servants, and fare as they did; and charged them not to molest her. Ruth surprised at this unexpected civility of a stranger, returned her thanks in a most profound respect and acknowledgement of his courtesy.

Boaz told her he had heard of her affectionate carriage to her mother-in-law, and that she was come with her into a strange country, out of a pious design, to be under the care and protection of the God of Israel; whom he solemnly prayed to recompence her good actions, and give her a full reward.

After this he treated her at his own board very liberally; and when his servants returned to their work in the field, he charged them to be civil to her, and to give her opportunity of gleaning the more, by dropping some of the sheaves. Thus Ruth continued gleaning among Boaz's servants till the barley and wheat harvest was over, dwelling still with Naomi, to whom she returned every evening with what she had gleaned, and acquainted her with the great humanity of Boaz.

Naomi, studious to recompense this tender affection of her daughter-in-law, projected how she might engage her kinsman Boaz to marry Ruth, whose civility she might reasonably imagine proceeded from some other motive than that of common courtesy or humanity.

Therefore acquainting Ruth, that Boaz was her near kinsman, and informing her what the law of Moses required in that case, she advised her to wash and anoint, and dress herself, and go to Boaz's barn, where he was winnowing his barley; but not to let it be known she was there, till he had supped, and was gone to rest, giving her instructions what she should do farther.

Ruth, pursuant to the advice of her mother, set herself forth to the best advantage, went to the barn and placed herself so conveniently, that she could see what passed, without being noticed.

When Boaz had refreshed himself, he lay down at the end of a heap of corn; and Ruth waiting till he was asleep, came softly, and lifting up the clothes undiscovered, laid herself down at his feet.

Boaz waking about midnight, in a fright, asked who she was? to which she answered, *I am Ruth thy servant:* (*h*) *spread therefore the wing of thy garment over me, for thou art a near kinsman.*

Boaz, though advanced in years, was so far from rejecting her, that he commended her forwardness; and

(*h*) *Spread.* This was as if she had said, take me to wife as the law directs: for the phrase of spreading the skirt or wing over one, imports taking one into protection And because it is the part of a husband to protect and defend his wife from injuries, therefore to spread the wing, or skirt over one, is used for a *periphrasis* of marriage.

being

being a virtuous man, told her, She had shewn more piety to her dead husband, than when he was alive, in raising up issue to his name by marrying her kinsman, and that her virtue was conspicuous in not following young men, whether poor or rich. Therefore he assured her, he would not fail to answer her desire, and his duty; which he had the greater inducement to do, because she had the general reputation of a virtuous wife: But at the same time told her, that though he indeed was a near kinsman, yet there was another nearer, to whom he must give the preference, because it was his right; and that he would communicate the matter to him next morning; and if that kinsman would marry her, he might, otherwise he himself would assuredly marry her.

To obviate any reflection that might be cast on her character or religion, she arose early in the morning and departed; but that she might not go home empty handed to her mother, Boaz gave her six measures of barley; with which Ruth returned to her mother, who received her joyfully both for the present of Boaz, and his kind treatment of her daughter, whom she advised to take no notice to any, of what had passed, but patiently to wait the event; assuring her, that Boaz was a man of honour, and would perform his promise.

Boaz, punctual in the performance of his word, appeared that morning at the gate of the city, which was in those days the usual place of judicature. There he met with the kinsman he had mentioned to Ruth; and summoning ten more of the chief of the city, he in their presence acquainted him, That Naomi, who was come back from the country of Moab, had a parcel of land to dispose of, which belonged formerly to *Elimelech*, of which he gave him this public notice, that he might (*i*) redeem it, the right of redemption belonging in the first place to him; and therefore he desired to know his mind in this matter.

The kinsman readily consented to redeem the land. But when Boaz told him, that at the same time he must likewise take Ruth the Moabitess to wife, to raise up the name of her dead husband upon his inheritance, he declined the business; giving this for a reason, That he could not do it on those terms, without destroying his own inheritance; and therefore he willingly resigned his right of redemption to Boaz; who, without any scruple, accepted it, and his kinsman, according to the custom of those times, in token of relinquishing or transferring his right, took off his (*k*) shoe, and delivered it to Boaz.

Upon

(*i*) *Redeem.* The reason of this seems to be grounded upon the law by which the first-born of such a marriage was to bear the name of the woman's former husband that was dead, to keep up his name in Israel; so that if that kinsman had married Ruth, and should have had but one son by her, that son being not to bear his name, but the name of her former husband, he himself should have had no son to keep up his name in Israel; and so his inheritance might have been lost from his name, by passing into another name and family: which he was not willing to hazard. The Hebrew word Goel is the same that Job uses for Redeemer, and always signifies a kinsman.

(*k*) *Shoe.* This was the manner of confirming bargains,

Upon which Boaz made this declaration to the elders, and all the people present. *Ye are my witneſſes this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was his ſon's, at the hand of Naomi.*

Ye ſee likewiſe I have purchaſed Ruth, the Moabiteſs, to be my wife, to raiſe up the name of the dead upon their inheritance, that their name may not be loſt among their relations. Of this I call you to witneſs this day.

To all which the assembly gave their acknowledgment, adding a hearty prayer, that she might be fruitful as Rachel and Leah, who were the original raisers of the house of Israel.

Ruth conceived, and in due time was delivered of a son, whom they named *Obed*; which Obed was the father of *Jeſſe*, and grandfather of king *David*, of whom, according to the flesh, (*l*) came the Saviour of the World.

During the wise and virtuous administration of *Deborah* and *Barak*, the Israelites enjoyed the blessing of peace; but when their conductors died, they fell into their constitutional sin of idolatry, and provoked their God to deliver them into the hands of their enemies. He permitted the Midianites to over-run their country, who for seven years kept them in such subjection, that they were forced to betake themselves to dens in the mountains and caves in the earth, and to fortified places; from whence, in spring time, they stole out to sow their land; but towards harvest the Amalekites and Midianites came and encamped in their country, and tarried till they had devoured all the provision and forage they could find, and then they returned, leaving the Israelites nothing to support life.

The poor Israelites being served thus year after year, at last grew greatly impoverished, which put them in mind, that by their sins they had drawn this punishment upon themselves; and that the only remedy was, to have recourse to the Lord, who had permitted these evils to befall them.

Whilst they were supplicating God for help, he sent a (*m*) Prophet to expostulate with them for their ingratitude, by which he brought them to a sense of their folly, and his justice in punishing them.

This judgment brought them humble before the Lord, and prepared them for a due reception of the bles-

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gains, sales, exchanges, and alienations, among the Israelites. There were two sorts of it:

The first was penal; as when a man refused to marry his brother's wife, to raise up seed to the deceased, who died childless; for then the law commanded, that the woman should pluck off his shoe, and spit in his face, using these words; "Thus shall it be done to the man that refuseth to raise up issue to his brother's family."

The second was cessionary, or in token of resignation, and did not reach to compel the kinsman in the second, third and fourth degree to marry the widow; but he might transfer his right to any other of the kindred; and as a sign of his cession or translation of his right, he took off his shoe and delivered it to his kinsman, who would marry the widow, in the presence of the elders.

(*l*) *Came.* Herein is described, how Jesus Christ proceeded of Ruth, notwithstanding she was a Moabite of low condition, and a stranger from the people of God: which was a type, that the Gentiles should be sanctified by him and joined with his people.

(*m*) *Prophet.* St. Augustine supposes him to be that angel which soon after appeared to Gideon; but others with greater probability suppose him to be some person endued with the spirit of prophesy by God, and sent to the Israelites, as other prophets were.

sing he was about to confer, in sending them a deliverer, in the person of *Gideon*, the son of *Joash*.

At this time Gideon was threshing wheat, that he might hide it from the Midianites. And whilst he was thus employed in providing sustenance for his family, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said, *The Lord be with thee, thou mighty Man of valour.*

Gideon was soon apprized, by the manner of this salutation, that it was a message extraordinary; and as readily replyed, *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all his miracles, which our Fore-fathers have told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

The Angel looking stedfastly on him, said, *Be couragious, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. Is it not I that sent thee?*

But Gideon, considering his own weakness, and the low condition of his own family, more than the presence of him that spoke to him, answered, *In what capacity am I to serve Israel, since my family is but poor in the tribe of Manasseh, and myself the least among them.*

The Angel to encourage him said, *Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites with as much ease, as if they were but one man.*

This promise offered Gideon a dawn of hope; but desirous of an assurance of the person who talked with him, he said, *If now I have found favour in thy sight, be pleased to shew me some token, whereby I may know that it is thou the Lord that talkest with me. Wherefore depart not hence I pray thee, till I return with my offering, and set it before thee.*

The angel promised to tarry; and Gideon having prepared a kid, and some unleavened cakes, he came and presented them before the Angel; by whose directions, having laid them upon the rock, the Angel, with the end of his staff, touched the cakes and the flesh, upon which fire came out of the rock and consumed them; and the Angel instantly disappeared.

Gideon upon this was sensible that it was an angel that had appeared to him, and crying out in despair, said, *Alas, my Lord God! because I have seen an Angel face to face, I shall die.*

But the Angel, though Gideon, could not see him, to confirm and comfort him, bid him not fear, for he should not die. Gideon, in thankful remembrance of this gracious interview, and God's goodness to him, built an altar there, and called it *Jehovah-Shalom*, that is, the Lord of Peace.

The same night the Lord commanded Gideon to demolish the altar of Baal, which in those corrupt times had been erected, and to cut down the groves there; and build an altar to the Lord his God upon the top of the rock; after which,

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to sacrifice his Father's (*n*) second bullock upon it, which was seven years old, and offer it for a burnt-sacrifice, with the wood of the grove, which he was to cut down.

Gideon readily obeyed God; but considering it would be difficult to do this in the day-time, he resolved to do it by night; and taking ten of his servants to assist him, he did as God had commanded him.

The inhabitants of the place being informed what Gideon had done, demanded him of his Father, that they might put him to death: but Joash would not deliver his son, resolutely saying, *If Baal is God, let him avenge himself on him that destroyed his altar.* From which occasion Joash called his son Gideon Jerub-Baal, which signifies, let Baal avenge. Thus this tumult ended.

CHAP.

(*n*) *Second.* This bullock is thought by the Rabbins and others to be called the second from the stall in which it stood and was fed, which was the second in order of place; and being as many years old, as their subjection to Midian was, the destroying this bullock might in some measure, prefigure the breaking off the Midianitish yoke from the neck of Gideon; whose name signifies a *breaker* or *destroyer.*

CHAP. VIII.

GIDEON MUSTERS THE TRIBES. RECEIVES AN OMEN OF SUCCESS. IS APPOINTED A SELECT NUMBER OF MEN. ENCOURAGED BY A DREAM. OBTAINS A SIGNAL VICTORY OVER THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL, AND DIES IN PEACE. THE ISRAELITES FALL INTO IDOLATRY AND INGRATITUDE. ABIMELECH IS MADE KING, AFTER THE BLOODY MASSACRE OF HIS BRETHREN. ABIMELECH AND THE SHECHEMITES ARE PUNISHED FOR THEIR CRUELTY AND WICKEDNESS.

IT was now about the time when the Midianites and Amalekites, with other Eastern people, used to come, and plunder the country, who appearing in a vast body, incamped in the valley of Jezreel.

Then was Gideon inspired with a more than ordinary courage, and by sound of trumpet summoned all those of his own family to come in quickly to him. He also sent messengers through the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, they came in such numbers, that in a short time he could muster up an army of two and thirty thousand men, which were but few in comparison of the enemy's army, which consisted of an hundred and thirty five thousand men.

Gideon, considering the vast odds the enemy had, begged of God to give him some omen for an assurance

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of success to him and his men. The sign he proposed was, that he laying a fleece of wool on the floor, the dew should be upon the fleece only, and the earth round it should be dry. Which the next morning was done; for the ground about it was dry, but the fleece was so full of dew, that he wrung a bowl-full of water out of it. Then (*o*) inverting the former manner, he desired that the fleece might be dry, and the ground dewy; which was likewise done.

Gideon being fully convinced by this double miracle, resolved forthwith to attack the enemy. But God knowing the folly and ingratitude of the Israelites, and rightly foreseeing, that if with this army they should conquer the Midianites, they would vainly impute it to their own courage and numbers, and not to his assistance; therefore ordered Gideon to make proclamation in the camp, that whosoever was afraid, should have liberty to return home.

Upon this, two and twenty thousand quitted this expedition, only ten thousand remaining with Gideon. This was a very inconsiderable number, in comparison of the numerous host of the Midianites.

But yet, few as the Israelites were, it came within the verge of possibility, that they might defeat their foes with this handful of men: and therefore God resolving that the whole action and victory should appear to be his doing, ordered Gideon to bring his soldiers down to the water, where he would give him a sign to direct him what men to select for this business, which was this. They that took up water in their hands and lapped it, should go with him; but they who lay down to drink, should not go. Only three hundred of them drank out of their hands, whom God commanded him to keep with him, and dismiss the rest.

But lest Gideon, upon God's reducing his army to so small a number as three hundred men, should grow diffident of the promised success, he was commanded to take his servant *Phura*, and late at night go to the enemy's camp and listen, where he should hear that which should encourage him. Which he accordingly did; and there he heard a soldier expounding a dream to another, which was so in favour of the Israelites, that he heard his own name mentioned, with this advantage, that God would deliver the Midianitish army into the hands of Gideon.

Thus encouraged, Gideon, in humble adoration, worshipped the God of his mercies; and getting back undiscovered, put his men in order, dividing them into three companies, an hundred in each. He gave to every man a trumpet, and a pitcher, with a burning lamp in it, charging them to observe his motions, and do just as they should see him do.

Gideon having thus disposed this little body of men, put himself at

(*o*) *Inverting.* It may reasonably be supposed, that Gideon, for his own satisfaction, would not have been thus impertinent to require a repetition of the sign, but that he rather did it to encourage his men, and to take off all suspicion of art or contrivance.

the head of one of them; and giving the signal, by breaking the pitchers, and sounding their trumpets, the rest did the like, and with a terrible shout they cried out, *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!* This alarm affected the eyes and the ears of the enemy with unusual objects, and encreased by the horror of the (*p*) night, so added to their confusion, that, mistaking their own party, they fell on each other's swords. God having before disposed the Midianites for destruction; so that Gideon and his army gained an easy victory, having nothing to do, but to pursue a flying and timorous enemy.

In this they were assisted by those, that on proclamation had deserted the common cause, who, though they were afraid to fight, yet had courage to pursue.

Gideon, to make sure work, and to prevent the Midianites, for some time, to give Israel any disturbance, sent to the Ephraimites to possess themselves of the passes on the Jordan, that so, few or none of them might escape.

This they accordingly performed, taking *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, two Midianitish princes, whom they slew, and then followed the pursuit! which Gideon and his party continued very closely till they came to Succoth, where being faint and weary they halted, and Gideon desired of the inhabitants some refreshment for his men. The princes of Succoth, knowing that Gideon with his small party was in chase of *Zebah* and *Zalmunna*, two of the kings of Midian, who with fifteen thousand men were fled to Karcor, instead of giving Gideon and his soldiers any refreshment, ridiculed him on the account of his little army, and in derision asked him whether he was so secure of victory over the princes he pursued, as to demand relief of them? This unmannerly and inhospitable treatment so incensed Gideon, that he told them, If the Lord gave him success against Zeba and Zalmunna, he would make them repent their incivility. The same he threatened to the inhabitants of Penuel for the like rudeness; and with his fatigued party continued the pursuit till he came to Karcor, where the two Midianitish princes with their rallied forces lay thoughtless of danger. But Gideon taking the advantage of this security, surprised and defeated them, taking the two kings prisoners, whom he brought in triumph with him to Succoth: And called the chiefs of the place, seventy-seven in number, who had before upbraided him, to a severe account, chastising them with thorns and briars, as he had before threatened them. Nor was he less sparing to Penuel, whose fortifications he demolished, and slew the governors.

The captive princes had barbarously destroyed all before them in their march, nor did Gideon's family escape the general massacre at Tabor. Gideon, intending to shew mercy to the two kings, if they had shewed

(*p*) *Night.* It is said, that this action began at the beginning of the middle watch; which dividing the night from six to six into four watches, as most do, should answer to ten at night with us.

any to his house, demanded what manner of men they were whom they had slain at Tabor; who answered somewhat flatteringly, that they were like him, having the majestic appearance of royal children. Gideon, from their description, concluding they were his brethren, whom they had slain, declared, if they had spared them, he would have saved their lives; but since they had killed his brethren, they must expect no mercy. Then commanding his son *Jether* to fall upon them, but he being a youth, and somewhat timorous, Gideon dispatched them with his own hand; ordering them to be stripped of their royal ornaments, and their camels of their rich trappings and furniture.

The Ephraimites, who had behaved most valiantly, brought the heads of *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, whom they had slain, to Gideon, as tokens of their singular service; and, beginning to quarrel with Gideon for not calling upon them at the first, he wisely pacified them, by magnifying their service and success in the pursuit. And now the strength of Midian being thus broke by the slaughter of their whole army, Israel enjoyed a peace of forty years.

The Israelites, fond of Gideon's courage and conduct, in this great deliverance, resolved to crown his merit with the settlement of the government on him and his family. But Gideon, well knowing the honour of this victory was not due to him, but God alone, modestly and generously declined their offer, saying, *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son, but the Lord shall rule over you. Yet to let you see I do not slight your kindness, I will request one thing of you; and that is, That you will give me the ear-rings of your plunder.*

To this they all readily consented; and spreading a garment on the ground, they threw in the ear-rings, which by weight amounted to one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold; besides the rich ornaments and robes of the kings, with the chains that were upon the camels' necks.

Of this gold Gideon made an (*q*) Ephod, and placed it in his own city Ophrah, where he dwelt, as a monument of this victory: Which in time, by a wrong use, and contrary to the will of Gideon, proved a snare to his family, and indeed to the whole house of Israel.

Gideon survived this signal victory forty years, during which, Israel enjoyed a profound peace; but at his death they fell, as usual, into idolatry and ingratitude, not only to God, but to the memory of Gideon their deliverer.

Gideon, by several wives, had seventy sons; and by a concubine, he had one son, whom he named *Abimelech*. And though Gideon had refused the government of Israel, both for himself and his sons, yet as soon as he was dead, his son Abimelech, an aspiring youth, suggesting to his mother's family at Shechem, that his seventy brethren would usurp the

(*q*) *Ephod.* The Ephod was the upper garment which the Priest wore upon his shoulders, but by the gold being used in making it, includes all the sacred ornaments.

govern-

government over them, advised them to consider, whether it would not be better for them to be governed by one than by seventy persons; at the same time, putting them in mind, that he was of their family and kindred.

His relations upon this suggestion proposed advancement to themselves, which they insinuated to the Shechemites, who closing with the project, contrived how to advance Abimelech to the government; and that money might not be wanting to forward the design, they took some out of the treasury of their God *Baal-Berith*, and gave it to Abimelech, who with it hired a company of dissolute fellows to attend him.

With these ruffians, he repaired to his deceased father's house at Ophrah, where he seized sixty-nine of his brethren, and slew them upon one (*r*) stone; the youngest, named *Jotham*, having timely notice, escaped. Soon after this bloody and unnatural execution, the Shechemites, having nothing to fear from Gideon's house, assembled together at Millo, and chose Abimelech (*s*) king.

When this inhuman procedure reached the ears of Jotham, he went to the top of mount Gerizim, where in a parabolical oration he represented to the Shechemites, how his father Jerub-bael, had refused to have the government of Israel settled upon him and his family; and that they had now disposed of it to one, as much inferior in virtue and honour to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to the olive, fig-tree, or vine; he expostulated the injury done to his family, and reproached them with their ingratitude, *If you have done truly and sincerely in making Abimelech king; and if you have dealt well with Jerub-baal and his house, who merited so well of you, (for my father fought for you and delivered you from the oppression of Midian, and yet you have risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, and made Abimelech, the son of his concubine, King, because he is your brother); If you have done well in this, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him rejoice in you.*

But, if not, let (*t*) *fire come out from* Abimelech, *and devour the men of* Shechem, *and the house of* Millo, *and let them devour him.*

Jotham having thus delivered himself to the Shechemites made his escape to Beer, where he lived secure from Abimelech's rage.

Within three years afterwards his curse was verified, both upon Abimelech and the Shechemites; for they conspired against Abimelech, attempting to seize or kill him. But being disappointed of their purpose, they

(*r*) *Stone.* Some will have this stone to be an altar, dedicated by Abimelech to the idol *Baal*, and erected in the same place, where his father Gideon had before destroyed the altar of Baal, to recompense the disgrace done by him to the idol.

(*s*) *King.* In this choice there were neither the call of God nor the consent of the people; for Abimelech was not appointed king by the body of the Israelites, but a few disorderly Shechemites, without the knowledge of Judah or the other tribes; and reigned only in Shechem.

(*t*) *Fire.* That is, let Abimelech be a scourge to the Shechemites, and they to him, in expiation of their injustice and ingratitude to the house of Gideon.

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joined another profligate wretch, and his company, one that lived by the spoil of others, as the Shechemites did. His name was *Gaal*, the son of *Ebed*, and an impudent boaster, but a very great coward.

Gaal being sent at the head of this dissolute gang, ravaged the country uncontrouled for some time, spoiling the vineyards of the Shechemites, who made Abimelech king; and in their mirth and jollity they despised Abimelech; but none spoke with more contempt of him than Gaal. The wild carriage of the abandoned Gaal, soon reached the ear of Zebul, who was Abimelech's vice-roy in Shechem; but he not being strong enough to chastise him for his insolence, sent privately to Abimelech, to aquaint him that Gaal and his mad crew were come to Shechem, and had fortified the city against him, advising him to come by night, and lie in ambuscade till the next morning, that so he might surprize them. Abimelech approved of the stratagem, and forthwith put it into execution; which succeeded so well, that Gaal, and those that followed him were defeated and slain; and the next day he stormed the place and took it; and to express his resentment more furiously, after he had demolished the city, he sowed it with (*u*) salt. But during these transactions, some that escaped the fury of the conqueror's sword, and had fled to the tower, seeing the houses of the city thrown down, not supposing themselves safe in the tower, took sanctuary in a fort belonging to the temple of their God Berith: which Abimelech hearing, he took an axe in his hand, and commanding his army to do the same, he marched up to the mount Malmon, where grew a grove of trees, and cutting down a bough, he laid it on his shoulder, and brought it to the fort: the rest did the same; and when they had laid the boughs together, Abimelech set them on fire; by which about a thousand men and women were destroyed.

This success encouraged Abimelech to attack the city of Thebez, which he took by storm. But there being a strong tower in the city, the inhabitants fled thither, and maintained it for some time against all the force of Abimelech, which so irritated the impatient conqueror, that pursuing his fate, he came near the tower to encourage his men, and facilitate the taking of it by his presence; but pressing too near the door, with a design to have set it on fire, a woman from above, cast down a piece of mill-stone upon his head, which broke his skull.

Abimelech, finding himself mortally wounded, called hastily to his armour-bearer, and commanded him to dispatch him, that it might not be said he died by the hand of a woman. His servants obeyed him, and the re-

(*u*) *Salt.* This was an old custom of punishing cities for treachery. Not that the strewing of salt signified drying up, or rendering of the soil barren; (for there was no occasion for that in an inhabited town) but to shew the detestation of their rebellion, and that hereafter none should rebuild or repeople it.

In this action part of Jotham's curse was accomplished; for Abimelech, though not a lawful king, yet served the Shechemites justly, who after they had made him their king, revolted from him.

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port of his death was no sooner rumoured among the troops, but they dispersed.

Thus were Abimelech and the Shechemites scourges to each other, and Jotham's curse completed in the fate of both.

CHAP. IX.

TOLA SUCCEEDS ABIMELECH IN THE CONDUCT OF THE ISRAELITES. THEY ARE AGAIN PUNISHED FOR THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS, AND ON THEIR SUBMISSION, FAVOURED WITH TOKENS OF THE DIVINE REGARD. JEPHTHAH FIRST DESPISED IS AFTERWARDS VESTED WITH THE COMMAND OF THE ISRAELITISH ARMY AGAINST THEIR ENEMIES. HE BEHAVES BRAVELY; MAKES AN EXTRAORDINARY VOW, WHICH HE EXECUTES WITH A MOST RIGID PUNCTUALITY. JEPHTHAH DIES. ISRAEL ENJOYS A PEACE DURING THE REIGNS OF THREE LEADERS. PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ATTENDED THE BIRTH OF SAMSON.

TOLA, the son of *Phua*, uncle by the father's side to Abimelech, of the tribe of *Iſſachar*, was appointed ruler or judge of Israel in his stead; of whom nothing is recorded, but that he governed Israel three and twenty years.

To him succeeded *Jair* of Gilead, who reigned two and twenty years.

After this, God being provoked by the idolatry of the Israelites, he permitted the Philistines, Amorites, and Ammonites, to over-run their country as they pleased for eighteen years; and in the last year, the Ammonites bent their whole force against the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim.

The Israelites, finding themselves not able to deal with the vast numbers of their enemies, became sensible of their follies, by which they had provoked God to punish them thus; and therefore acknowledging their sin of idolatry, they begged of God to assist them once more.

But God upbraided them with ingratitude, and to increace the pungency of their sorrow, bade them cry to the Gods which they had chosen, and try if they would deliver them in the time of their distress. This was a cutting reproof to the Israelites.

However, to recover God's favour and protection, they reformed; for they put away their idols, and served the Lord.

The God of Israel after his wonted goodness to that ungrateful people, having brought them to a sense of their crimes by the rigour of his punishment, again returned to them in much mercy, and pointed out to them the certain means of deliverance. There was at that time in the half tribe of Manasseh, which settled on the other side of Jordan, a man of note amongst his people, whose name was *Gilead*, of the family of that *Gilead* the son of *Machir*, to whom Moses gave the city Gilead, from whence the family was called Gileadites.

This Gilead had several sons by his

wife; and he had one son by a (x) harlot, whom he named Jephthah.

When Gilead's lawful sons were grown up, they thrust out *Jephthah*, telling him, that being not born in lawful matrimony, he should have no inheritance among them.

Jephthah, upon this, expecting worse usage, hastened from them, and took up his station in the land of *Tob*; which place being very subject to the depredations and military expeditions of the enemy, Jephthah the rather chose for his residence, being himself naturally brave and daring. In their excursions against the enemy, he always distinguished himself; so at last he was courted to accept a command of a number of young fellows, with whom he went a foraging.

In this time of general prowess, the Gileadites thinking themselves aggrieved by the Ammonites, resolved upon war, but wanted a general. Whereupon at a grand meeting of their chiefs, it was agreed, that he who should first attack the Ammonites should be their general.

Then bethinking themselves of Jephthah, whom they knew to be a man of courage and conduct, they addressed themselves to him, and offered him the command of their army.

Jephthah, surprized at this sudden change, asked them, how they who had expelled him his father's house, could expect any succour from him in their distress? They acknowledged their present distress was the only motive of their coming, and repeated their importunes to him to go with them.

Jephthah mindful of the ill treatment he had received from the people, who now offered him a post of honour, determined not to engage with them, but upon sure terms. For, says he, *if I go along with you, and succeed againſt the Ammonites, ſhall I be your ruler afterwards.*

Their necessity was so pressing at this time, that they readily consented, solemnly engaging that it should be so. Upon this, Jephthah went with them, and the people made him captain over them; and Jephthah repeated the covenant, or agreement, between them and him before the Lord in Mizpeh.

Jephthah, having thus secured to himself the conduct of the Israelites, in case of success, was greatly animated, and sent ambassadors to the king of Ammon, to demand the reason of his invading the Israelites.

The Ammonitish king reply'd, that the land was his, and that the Israelites, upon their coming out of Egypt, took it from the Ammonites; which now he demanded, or would make them restore it.

Jephthah by other ambassadors told him the case from the beginning; that the Israelites, in their passage from Egypt, being denied to pass through the countries of Edom and Moab, were forced to fetch a great compass until they came unto the land of the Amorites; where they were not only refused a passage, but

(x) *Harlot* It means that she was one of those women who kept a house of public entertainment.

attacked

attacked in a hostile manner, by the Amoritish king, whom the Israelites defeated in a pitched battle, fairly conquering, not only the kingdom of the Amorites, but whatsoever else belonged to Sihon the Amoritish king; who having before taken from the king of Moab, the land now in dispute, it fell with the rest by conquest from the Amorite to Israel. Besides, he confirmed Israel's title by a long prescription of many years, peaceable enjoyment.

But these reasons would not do with the king of Ammon, who marched directly against the Israelites, and was by them as warmly received.

But before the action, Jephthah, the more readily to secure himself of victory, made this vow, to the Lord; *If*, said he, *thou wilt give me success against the Ammonites this day, whatsoever cometh forth of mine house to meet me, when I return, I will surely consecrate to the Lord, or I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.**

To this victory of Jephthah's, a civil war succeeded, between the tribe of Ephraim, and the tribe of Gilead.

The Ephraimites were an ambitious quarrelsome people, and this was not the first instance of their temper, which formerly went no further than words: but now the mutinous Ephraimites carried it further, and with as little reason: for assembling their forces together, they came upon Jephthah, and demanded why he fought the Ammonites without them? Jephthah very justly remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their demand, and shewed that the cause of their dissatisfaction was owing to themselves, who refused to come to his assistance when the Ammonites attacked him. The unreasonable Ephraimites were so enraged at this just reproach, that, having nothing to urge in vindication of themselves, and depending on their numbers, threatened to burn his house over his head.

Jephthah finding it to no purpose

* This passage has occasioned no small controversy among commentators.—The doubt is, whether Jephthah offered up his daughter for a burnt-offering, or consecrated her to the public service of God. It appears, that Jephthah's daughter was not sacrificed, but devoted to the Lord. It is plain that in many cases, his vow could not have been executed: for suppose on his return, that a dog, or any other unclean animal, had first met him, he must not have offered it for a burnt-offering, the law of Moses having strictly forbidden such sacrifices; besides, if Jephthah was under a necessity of offering his daughter, who was to be employed in that disagreeable task? The priests were commanded to do all in their power to deter the people from the commission of so abominable a practice; the magistrates well knew, that such sacrifices were strictly forbidden by God himself, and certainly no person can conceive Jephthah capable of undertaking such an inhuman office. Upon the whole, therefore, I think it appears, that she was not sacrificed, but devoted to the service of God.

And she knew no man, Judges, xi. 39. This it is thought, is a sufficient proof that she was not sacrificed; for otherwise, it would have been superfluous to say, that after the vow was performed, she knew no man.

The daughters of Israel *went yearly*, Judges xi. 40. The original word, which we render, lament, is capable of different significations; by some it is translated, to talk with; by others, to praise; if we adopt the first, it is a demonstrative proof that she was alive, and therefore they went at certain seasons, to comfort and console her. If the latter, the sense will be, that they went to praise her virtue, who, in the midst of her father's afflictions for the miserable condition to which his rash vow had subjected her, did all in her power to asswage his grief, by assuring him, that she submitted to the will of God with the utmost resignation, and that though a state of perpetual virginity was the greatest punishment which could befal an Israelitish woman, who generally placed her greatest happiness in the expectation of the Messiah's springing from her seed, yet even this she would cheerfully undergo, rather than he should falsify the oath he had made.

to reason longer with them, mustered what force he could in so short time, and being flushed with the late success, resolved to fight the Ephraimites who had no reason to despise him and his, or call them fugitives of Ephraim; for the Gileadites needed no reproach to rouze or whet their courage, especially under the conduct of their valiant general Jephthah. The armies joined, and after a short but sharp dispute, the fortune of the battle declared for Gilead, Ephraim being forced to fly. Jephthah resolving to make sure work, and prevent the Ephraimites from disturbing him quickly, secured all the passes on the Jordan, which those Ephraimites that escaped in the fight, must of necessity pass, to get home: so that as fast as any of them came thither, if upon examination they owned themselves Ephraimites, they were put to the sword: if any denied, they gave them the test, which was to pronounce the word (y) SHIBBOLETH, which they could not do, either through fear or infatuation, calling it SIBBOLETH; which small variation cost them their lives. In this action and pursuit there were slain two and forty thousand of the Ephraimites.

Jephthah, having thus through the divine assistance signalized his valour in a series of success, both against foreign and domestick enemies, spent the rest of his life in peace, which lasted not long, for the whole time of his administration was but of six years continuance.

Jephthah was succeeded by *Ibzan* of Bethlehem, of whom there is nothing more recorded, than that he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, and that he reigned seven years.

Elon a Zebulonite succeeded Ibzan, who governed Israel ten years; and after him *Abdon* ruled eight: all that was said of this last is, that he had forty sons, and thirty grandsons.

In these three reigns, Israel enjoyed a peace of three and twenty years; in which time, growing wanton they lapsed into their former sins; by which they provoked God to punish them, which he did, in delivering them into the hands of the Philistines.

Samson of whose exploits much is recorded in sacred writ, is supposed to have been born about the time of (z) Jephthah's victory. His birth being attended with unusual events and circumstances, we shall relate the particulars.

Samson was the son of *Manoah* a (a) Danite, whose wife having been long barren, the Angel of the Lord appeared to her, when alone, and told her, she should conceive, and bear a son, directing her how to manage and order herself whilst she was with child, by forbearing wine or strong drink, and all unclean meats.

(y) *Shibboleth.* Which signifies a stream, watercourse, or falling of waters.

(z) *Jephthah's.* Allowing Samson to have been born at this time, he must be at least thirty years old at the death of Abdon, his immediate predecessor, and when he took upon him the administration.

(a) *Danite.* The tribe of Dan bordering upon the Philistines was most exposed to their incursions and invasions, and therefore God out of that tribe chose Samson for a judge and revenger. Which is very agreeable to the prophecy of Jacob when he blessed his sons a little before his death. Dan *shall be a Serpent by the way, an Adder by the path, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider shall fall backwards.*

And

And that after she was delivered of him, she should not * shave his head; for he should be a *Nazarite* unto God from his birth, and should begin to deliver Israel from the oppressions of the Philistines.

The woman informed her husband of this extraordinary interview with the Angel, and the injunctions she had received from him; Manoah was not so much surprized as overjoyed at the hopes of having a son, but had an earnest desire to see this divine messenger himself, his pretence for it, being to be further instructed in the management of the child, when he should be born.

God graciously answered his request; and the Angel again appeared, repeating to the expecting couple the former instructions. The Angel appearing in human shape, Manoah took him to be a Man of God, and pressed him to accept of an entertainment.

The Angel told him, he would not; but advised him to express his gratitude in a burnt-offering to the Lord.

Manoah accordingly prepared a kid and a meat-offering, and offered as a sacrifice unto God; and then the Angel in a wonderful manner discovered himself, which before he refused to do at Manoah's importunity; for when the flame ascended from the altar, the Angel ascended in it and disappeared.

Now poor Manoah began too late, he feared, to repent his curiosity, and both he and his wife prostrated themselves on the ground, but he looking upon himself and wife as lost, cried out, *We shall surely die, because we have dared to see God.*

But the woman, armed with more reason and courage, argued with her timorous and desponding husband, and told him, that if the Lord had intended to destroy them, he would not have accepted an offering from them, nor condescend to communicate such a blessing to them as he had promised.

Accordingly to the appointed time the woman was delivered of a son, whom, from the Angel's appearing a second time to her, she called Samson.

By the consequence, it is reasonable to suppose, that Samson's parents observed the directions given by the Angel for his nursing and erudition; for whilst a child, the Lord blessed him, so that he grew to a wonderful strength. And while he was but a youth, the Spirit of the Lord began to (*b*) move him at certain times

* *Shave.* Long hair was much esteemed among the Jews, and here Samson's mother was forbid to cut his hair, because he was to be a Nazarite unto the Lord, that is, dedicated to him.

As to the cutting off his hair after by Delilah, it was done in a fraudulent manner, not only to deprive him of his hair, but of his strength, that so they might destroy him.

(*b*) *Move him.* This is an Hebrew phrase and it is often used upon particular occasions. Hence St. Ambrose observes on Luke i. 17. *He shall go before him in the spirit and power of* Elias; these two, the spirit and power (which is fortitude) whether in attempting or suffering, is from the Holy Ghost, that inspires us.

to exert himself in actions of strength and activity, in the (c) old camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

CHAP. X.

SAMSON'S EXTRAORDINARY EXPLOITS FROM VARIOUS INTERESTING CAUSES. EXTRAORDINARY CONQUEST OVER THE PHILISTINES. HIS REMARKABLE STRENGTH. HE IS OVERCOME BY DELILAH. BIRTH OF SAMUEL. GOD'S EXTRAORDINARY REVELATION TO HIM.

SAMSON, being grown to man's estate, had a mind to travel, and see the country; and coming to Timnath, a city belonging to the Philistines; he happened to cast his eyes on a beautiful Philistine, who so captivated the young hero, that he could not live without her. But in duty to his father and mother, he would not marry without their consent.

The fond parents expostulated with their son, the unreasonableness of the match, in offering to marry into an uncircumcised family. But the amorous youth consulting his passion more than religion, was so pressing in his request to his parents, that their indulgence was not proof against it. But to gratify him, they went with him to Timnath, to see this beauty, and treat with her parents about the marriage.

During the course of their journey, it happened that Samson was at some distance from the company, when a young lion came in a mighty rage out of the vineyards of Timnath and attacked him.

Upon which the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, so that he slew the lion with as much ease, as if it had been a kid.

After this action he went on and overtook his parents, but acquainted them not with this adventure of the lion.

Being arrived at Timnath, the match was soon concluded. And not long after, Samson and his parents, took another journey to solemnize their nuptials; and in their way to Timnath, Samson remembering the place where he had encountered with the lion, his curiosity led him to see what was become of the carcase; when, to his great surprize, he found a swarm of bees, with some honey, of which, taking some in his hands, he went on eating; and when he overtook his parents, he gave them some of it, but did not inform them from whence he had it.

Being arrived at Timnath, Samson entertained the relations, on both sides, for seven days; and to grace the nuptials the more, his wife's kindred brought thirty of their prime youth to bear him company. To these young men, Samson, during the wedding-feast, proposed a riddle, which was this, *Out of the eater came forth*

(c) *Old Camp.* This camp of Dan was probably that place, where the Danites pitched their camp in their expedition and enterprize against Laish; for it is not likely, that the Philistines, who had the Israelites at that time under entire subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp. And, if the reader looks back a little, this is another argument, that the story of Micah, and of the Danites expedition, was transacted before Samson's time, though by the compilers of the Bible they are related after.

forth meat, and out of the ſtrong came forth ſweetneſs.

He gave them seven days to expound the riddle in, upon condition that if they expounded it, he would give them thirty garments, and as many shirts; but if they did not, they should give him the same number.

The young men not knowing how to expound the riddle, applied themselves to his wife, and persuaded her to discover the meaning of it. After much importunity she prevailed upon her husband, who was so weak as to trust her with it, and she immediately told it to those young men, who came to Samson at the end of the seven days, and said, *What is ſweeter than honey, and what is ſtronger than a lion?*

Samson was satisfied his wife had discovered the secret; for he knew he had told it to nobody else; and therefore to let them know he was sensible of foul play in the matter, he with indignation replied, *If you had not plowed with my heifer, you could not have expounded my riddle.*

Then yielding his wager lost, he prepared to pay it; and going to Ascalon, a city of the Philistines, he slew thirty men, whose garments he gave to those who had expounded the riddle.

Being incensed against the Philistines for this unfair dealing about the riddle, he left Timnath and returned to his father's house. But though he had entertained a just resentment against the Philistines, yet he retained a fondness for his wife, to whose weakness he did not so much impute the discovery of the riddle, as to the fraud of her countrymen.

Some time after, he returned to Timnath to visit his wife, and as a token of his affection, he brought a kid with him for a present; and preparing to go to bed to her, her father would not permit him, urging for excuse, that he thought he slighted her, and therefore had given her in marriage to one of his (*d*) companions, But, if he pleased, her youngest sister, who was more beautiful, was at his service.

Such a circumstance could not fail of exasperating Samson to a great degree, and he therefore determined on a severe revenge, which he took care to execute.

Having found means to catch three hundred (*e*) foxes, which he tied two and two together, by the tails, with lighted torches to them, and drove them into the standing corn, by which means he burnt not only the corn, but the vineyards and olive-trees.

The Philistines, understanding it was Samson, son-in-law to the Timnite, that had done this mischief, because his father-in-law had taken away his wife, came in revenge to Timnath, and burnt Samson's wife and her father.

This gave Samson fresh occasion

(*d*) *Companions.* I suppose to one of the thirty, that they had provided to bear him company at the wedding; and, it is very probable, as a reward of the treachery in discovering the secret of the riddle.

(*e*) *Foxes.* The catching of so many foxes may be questioned by some. But it is plain from scripture, that Judea, and especially that part of it which was the portion of the tribe of Dan (to which Samson belonged) abounded with foxes.

of

of quarrelling with the Philistines, and he was so far from concealing his resentment, or using any stratagem to be revenged on them, that he openly declared he would have satisfaction, which he forthwith did in a great slaughter of them.

Samson, persuaded that so rigorous a procedure, must inflame the already incensed Philistines, and in order to secure himself from their resentment, took up his residence in the top of the rock *Etam*; which when the Philistines understood, they marched into Judah and encamped there, demanding Samson of the inhabitants, that they might have satisfaction of him for the wrong he had done them.

The men of Judah dreading the consequence of this invasion, immediately detached three thousand men of their tribe, to go and take Samson, and say to him, *Didst thou not know, that we were subject to the Philistines? why then hast thou provoked them so much?* Adding, *that they were come to seize and deliver him to the Philistines.*

Samson knew his own srength, but would not use it against his countrymen; only obliging them by oath not to side with the Philistines against him, he gave them leave to bind him: upon which they brought him to the place where the Philistines lay encamped; who seeing him brought bound, thought they had him secure, and went out shouting for joy to receive him.

But, before they could lay hands on him, the spirit of the Lord came upon him so powerfully, that he broke the cords of his arms with as much ease as if they had been burnt flax; and looking about him for a weapon, he could find no better than a jaw-bone of an ass; however, being divinely inspired, he dispatched a thousand of the Philistines.

The heat of this action made him so excessively thirsty, that he was ready to faint, and being in a place where there was no water to be had, he addressed himself to the Lord thus; *Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hands of thy servants: and shall I die with thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?*

God heard his complaint, and that this miraculous victory gained by the hand of one man, and so poorly armed, as with nothing but the jaw-bone of an ass, might not be unattainted, he as miraculously gratified the champion's thirst, by a supply of water from a rock, which never before produced any moisture; he clave a hollow *(f)* rock, called *Mactes*, which was at *Lehi*, and water plentifully flowed from it; of which Samson having drank, his spirit came, and he revived.

The next evidence of the amazing power of Sampson was at Gaza, another city of the Philistines, where he took up his lodging in a house of public entertainment.

He was not long concealed here; for the inhabitants of the place hav-

(*f*) *Rock.* *Josephus*, the historian, remarks, *Antiq.* l. 7. c. 10. "That God, having heard the prayer of Samson, made a fountain to spring in a rock, which did send out abundance of sweet and clear water".

ing

ing notice of him, beset the house; and watching for him all night at the gate of the city, concluded they should have him in the morning, and then they would dispatch him.

Samson being informed of their design upon him, lay still till midnight; and then rising, took the gates of the city, with the two posts and bars, and laying them on his shoulders, carried them to the top of a hill, which looked towards Hebron, and so escaped the danger that threatened him.

But a more fatal danger than this soon after befel him; for falling in love with a beautiful woman that lived in the vale of *Sorek*, whose name was *Delilah*, he was so captivated with her charms, that he had little regard to his own safety.

The princes of the Philistines observing Samson's fondness, took advantage of it; and addressing themselves to Delilah, promised to give her from each of them eleven hundred shekels of silver, if she could entice him to discover to her wherein his great strength lay, that so they might bind and punish him for the great mischief he had done them.

So great a bribe easily prevailed with the woman to betray her lover; who, after much solicitation, told her That he had been a Nazarite to God from his birth, and that no razor ever yet came upon his head; but if he should be shaven, his strength would be no more than that of a common man.

Delilah having thus extorted the great secret from him, sent for the princes of the Philistines to come to her, assuring them that he had discovered the whole secret of his strength to her. They accordingly came and brought the money they had promised her; and she having lulled him to sleep, as his head lay on her lap, a man, whom she had provided, shaved off the seven locks of his head; they rousing him, she said, *The Philiſtines be upon thee Samſon.*

He, not knowing what was done, thought to stretch himself, as he used to do, for as yet he knew not that the Lord was departed from him; but he too soon discovered it by the loss of his strength.

The Philistines, seeing him now really disabled, seized him immediately; and to make sure of him, they put out his eyes; and bringing him to Gaza, they fettered him, and made him work in the prison.

The Philistines having apparently vanquished so formidable a foe, used their common method of festivity, and vainly offered oblations at the shrine of their God (*g*) *Dagon*.

When they had feasted awhile, and were grown merry, they called for Samson to make sport: upon which he was brought from the prison, and being placed between the two pillars that supported the roof, they made themselves sport with him.

Besides the great conflux of people, that were in the house of *Dagon*

(*g*) *Dagon*. This Dagon was the common God of the sea-coast, having the form of a man from the navel upwards, and downwards of a fish; from which the word is derived.

at this solemnity, there were about three thousand on the roof that came to be spectators of Samson's misery. By this time his hair was somewhat grown; and it is probable his strength began to return. However, it is very likely these indignities offered him by the Philistines, provoked him to the highest degree: Wherefore persuading the lad that guided him, to set him so that he might feel both the pillars on which the house stood, on pretence of leaning on them to rest himself, he with great earnestness, prayed to God to strengthen him but this one time, that he might be revenged of the Philistines for the loss of his eyes.

God heard his prayers, and gave him such a wonderful accession of strength, that taking hold on the two pillars, with both his hands, he bowed himself with all his might, at the same time saying, *Let me die with the Philistines.*

He exerted his strength in such a manner, that forcing the pillars from their bases, the house fell down upon all that were in it. So that Samson had full revenge on his enemies, and put an end to his miserable condition; slaying more at his death than in the height of his strength.

Thus died Samson, who is said to have judged Israel twelve years; and was rather a scourge to the Philistines than a deliverer of the Israelites. Yet he may be said to have begun to deliver Israel in this last action, though it cost him his life.

When his relations heard of his death, they came and brought him to his fathers's sepulchre, between *Zorah* and *Ashtaol*, where they buried him.

From sacred history, the conduct of the Israelites, on the demise of Samson, seems to have devolved upon *Eli*, who was then High-priest.

In the beginning of his reign *Samuel* the prophet was born, the son of *Elkanah*, a (*h*) Levite, descended from *Korah*. He lived in the city of Ramah, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, with his two wives *Hannah* and *Peninnah*. The latter of which had children, but the first none.

Elkanah, according to custom, once a year, went up to Shiloh, to worship and sacrifice to the Lord, taking his two wives and his children with him; where, after he had made his offerings, he gave presents to both his wives; but Hannah, being his best beloved, he gave her a double share of his favour.

This caused a jealousy between the two wives, and Peninnah priding herself in her children, reproached Hannah for her sterility. Her husband endeavoured to comfort her: but Hannah sought for it from a more powerful hand, addressing herself earnesly in prayer to the Lord, and vowing at the same time, that if he would bless her with a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life, and that no razor should come upon his head

(*h*) *Levite, descended, &c. Elkanah* was descended from that *Korah*, who in Moses's time, for his rebellion in the wilderness, was swallowed up by the gaping earth and all that he had with him, except his son, from the eldest of which, named *Assir*, the genealogy is drawn down to *Samuel*.

Eli

Eli, the priest seeing her lips move, but not hearing her speak, supposed she was intoxicated with wine, and chid her for it; but finding himself mistaken, he turned his reproof into a blessing, praying to God to hear her petition.

Being returned to Ramah, she conceived, and was in due time delivered of a son, whom she called Samuel, because she had asked him of God, which his name implied.

Hannah, having weaned her little son, according to her promise, brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh, with an offering, acquainted Eli, that she was the woman, that some time since had prayed to the Lord for a child, and that she came to perform her vow, which was to dedicate him to the service of the Lord.

On this occasion, Eli gave thanks unto the Lord, for having heard and answered Hannah's prayer: and Hannah, in a holy rhapsody, did the same.

Elkanah and Hannah having performed their vow, prepared to return; and Eli pronouncing a blessing unto them said, *the Lord give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the Lord*, meaning Samuel, whom they left behind with Eli, who put on him a linen Ephod, and he served in the house of the Lord, as Eli had directed him.

After this, once a year, till he grew up, his mother, when she came to offer the yearly sacrifice, made him a little coat, and brought it to him.

Eli the priest had two sons, but very wicked; for valuing themselves upon the authority and dignity of the priesthood, they domineered over the men, and debauched the women. And to such an height had their insolence grown, that not content with the portion of the flesh of the sacrifice which God had assigned them, they would seize what they liked best, and at what time they pleased. By this means the service of God grew contemptible in the eyes of the people, who grew indifferent whether they offered or not. But however heinous the sins of the priests might be, they did not excuse the people from guilt, in neglecting the service of the Lord.

The good old prophet had often heard of the conduct of his impious sons, yet did not restrain or punish them, as he, that was both father and migistrate, ought to have done; giving them only a slight reproof, which was so far from dissuading, that they still persisted in their wicked practices.

At last a man of God came to Eli with a message, that threatened him and his household with ruin, for his careless and mild administration. First upbraiding him with ingratitude, for slighting the honour done his family, in investing the priesthood in it, threatening his sons, Hophni and Phineas with death, which he foretold should happen at one and the same time.

And to shew Eli the wretched poverty that his posterity should fall into, he added, that every one that should be left in his house, should come and crouch to a more faithful priest (whom the Lord would set up) for a piece of silver, and a morsel of bread;

bread; and should say, *put me I pray thee, in one of the prieſt's office, that I may have a piece of bread to eat.*

Soon after this, it pleased God to give his old servant an awful denunciation of his judgment by a younger hand.

Samuel, being lodged in the further part of the tabernacle, among the Levites, the Lord in the night called him by his name, who, as the manner was, answered, *here am I?* and starting up, ran to Eli's apartment; supposing he had called. But when Eli told him, he had not called him, he went and laid down again. This was repeated three times; and Samuel began at last to be positive with Eli, that he really did call him.

This roused Eli, and made him think there was something extraordinary in it; which thought he communicated to Samuel, bidding him go to bed again; and directing him, that if the Lord should call him again, he should say, *ſpeak Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.*

As Eli suspected, so it happened; and Samuel did as he directed him.

Then said the Lord to Samuel. *All that I have ſpoken concerning Eli and his houſe, I will perform; for I have told him, that I will judge his houſe for ever, for the iniquity to which he is privy. Becauſe his ſons made themſelves vile, and he did not reſtrain them; Therefore I have ſworn unto the houſe of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's houſe ſhall not be purged with ſacrifice, nor offering for ever.*

This sentence was so terrible, even to Samuel, though he had no share in it, that he was afraid to tell it to Eli; but Eli now thoroughly awakened, by the message he had received before, and the apprehension he now had, that the Lord had revealed something like it to Samuel, obliged him to tell, what the Lord had repeated to him.

Samuel obeyed, and informed him of the whole truth. To which poor Eli humbly submitted, saying, *it is the Lord, let him do what he pleaſeth.*

And now to the great comfort of Israel, God was pleased to appear again in Shiloh, and there revealed himself to Samuel. For as he grew up, both in stature as a man, and in grace as a man of God, the Lord was with him; and accomplished whatever he spoke by him; so that all Israel knew, from one end to the other, that Samuel was a faithful prophet to the Lord.

CHAP. XI.

THE ISRAELITES CONQUERED BY THE PHILISTINES. ELI'S SONS ARE PUNISHED; HE BREAKS HIS NECK. DAGON FALLS BEFORE THE ARK OF THE LORD. ON THE REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE, AT THE INSTIGATION OF SAMUEL, THEY CONQUER THE PHILISTINES. SAMUEL ENTERTAINETH SAUL. ANOINTS HIM PRINCE OVER THE LORD'S INHERITANCE. SAUL IS CHOSEN BY LOT.

THE Israelites being again blessed with a prophet, proposed to themselves great things, concluding, that all they now undertook would succeed; and therefore being animated with this thought, they had

had a mind to try, if they could not shake off the Philistine yoke. Wherefore, intending to fight them, they incamped in a place, which was afterwards, upon better suceess, called *Eben-Ezer*.

The Philistines sat down by *Aphek*, a city of Judah, and in a short time the armies joined; but the Israelites, instead of victory, found the judgment of God denounced aginst priest and people, ready to fall on them; for in the action they lost four thousand of their men. The rest making an orderly retreat to their camp, the elders began to consider what might be the cause of this defeat; and fondly supposing it to be for want of having the ark with them, they resolved for the future to carry it with them in all their other expeditions.

Then they sent messengers to Shiloh, for Hophni and Phineas, the priests, to bring the ark into the camp; which they forthwith did. Aud when the Israelites saw the ark brought into the camp, they gave such a shout, as made the earth ring, which so disheartened the Philistines, that they were at the brink of despair, especially when they heard the true cause of this rejoicing.

The Israelites on the other hand were as fool-hardy, as the Philistines were dejected. For concluding themselves secure, under the protection of the ark, and not in the least doubting their success, they again offered the Philistines battle; who in this engagement, slew thirty thousand of their foot, among which were Hophni and Phineas, put the rest to flight, and, which was the terrible blow of all, took the ark of God.

One of the soldiers of the tribe of Benjamin, seeing the day lost, made his escape from the field of battle, and came running to Shiloh with his cloaths rent, and earth upon his head; which in those countries were emblems of extreme sorrow, for the greatest losses and misfortunes.

Notwithstanding old Eli's default, in his administrations, which provoked God, he had a most zealous regard for the welfare of Israel and especially the ark of the Lord. Upon this account therefore he went and sat at the gate to hear (for he could not see) how affairs went: whilst he was sitting here, the aforesaid Benjamite that escaped in the fight, having told the citizens how things went, there was a mighty outcry among them. Whereupon Eli asking what was the meaning of that tumult, the Benjamite soldier was brought to him, who told him the Israelites were routed, his sons in the number of the slain, and the ark of the Lord taken.

Eli kept his seat till the last piece of news was told him, but then his spirits failing, he fell from his seat backwards; and being heavy as well as old, his neck broke with the fall, and he died, having judged Israel forty years.

His son Phineas had a wife at this time, who being big with-child, and near her time, hearing of the death of her father and her husband, and the loss of the ark, fell in labour; and being delivered of a son, with

her dying breath she named him, *Ichabod*; which signifies, no glory, adding, as a reason of giving the child this name, *that the glory is departed from Iſrael*, which she meant by the taking of the ark of God.

The Philistines having cleared the field, and carried off the plunder, brought the ark to *Aſhdod*, and placed it in the temple of Dagon near to the idol; whom the next morning they found fallen down upon his face before the ark of the Lord. They set him in his place, and next day came in again, and not only found him fallen to the ground, but his head and palms of his hands broken off, and lying on the threshold, only his lower part was left intire. Whence a superstitious custom arose among the Philistines, that neither priests, nor people would tread upon the threshold.

In order to convince the idolatrous Israelites, that the cause was no longer between the Philistines and the Israelites, but between God and Dagon; the Lord laid his heavy judgments on Ashdod, and all the coast towns thereabouts, afflicting the people with piles, and destroying at the same time the country with mice. The people of Ashdod were sensible this was a judgment from the God of Israel for taking and detaining the ark; therefore consulting what to do, the princes of the Philistines, partly to redress the complaints of the Ashdodites, but chiefly to carry the ark about in triumph, sent it to *Gath*, where the same judgments pursued the detainers of it. Whereupon they removed it to *Ekron*, but the inhabitants no sooner saw it, but they cried out, *they have brought about the ark of the God of Iſrael to ſlay us and our people*.

Whilst the ark was here, not only the piles, but a deadly plague attended the people; wherefore calling the priests, they resolved to send the ark away empty, but to prepare a trespass-offering for the atonement of their sacrilege, which was to consist of five golden emrods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the princes of the Philistines; hoping, that by thus acknowledging the glory of the Lord of Israel, he would rid them of the plagues he had inflicted on them; for why, said the priests, should you be obstinate, as the Egyptians were, to your own destruction? Then directing them to provide a new cart, and two milch kine, that never had been yoked, and fasten them to the cart, without their calves; they bade them lay the ark on the cart, and put the golden emrods and mice in a coffer by the side of the ark, and send them away; but cautioned them strictly to observe which way the cart-went; for if it went by the way of *Bethſhemeſh*, they might conclude, that it was the God of Israel that had plagued them; but if it went not that way, they should look upon all these judgments only as common accidents.

The Philistines sending the ark away in this manner, the kine that drew it went on lowing directly to Bethshemesh. The five princes of the Philistines followed at a distance to see what would become of it; who, when they saw it arrive safely at Bethshemesh,

Bethshemesh, returned to Ekron. The Bethshemites, who were reaping in the valley, seeing the ark, were overjoyed.

The kine having drawn the cart into the field of Joshua the Bethshemite, stood still there by a great stone, called the stone of *Abel*, which the Levites seeing, they took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was in it, and laid them upon the great stone. Then cleaving the wood of the cart to make a fire with, they offered the kine for a burnt-offering unto the Lord.

But some of the Bethshemites whether moved by joy or curiosity, took the liberty of looking into the ark, contrary to the law; for which the Lord smote fifty thousand and (*i*) threescore and ten of them, which so terrified the rest, that they cried out, *who is able to ſtand before the holy Lord God? And to whom ſhall he go from us?*

This made them desirous of removing the ark, and send to *Kirjath-jeraim*, to acquaint them that the Philistines had sent back the ark of the Lord, and desired them to come and fetch it.

Accordingly they came, and conveyed the ark to the house of *Abinadah* on the hill, whose son *Eleazar* was consecrated to keep it, where it abode twenty years.

Samuel, upon the death of old Eli, and the loss of the ark of God, at this critical juncture, took upon him the conduct of the idolatrous Israelites. At the end of twenty years, finding in the people a good disposition to repent and return to the Lord, he exhorted them to put away the strange Gods, *Baal* and *Aſhteroth*, and only to serve the Lord, promising, That if they would do so, they should be delivered from the Philistines.

Then ordering all Israel to meet him at Mizpeth, they came to him there. Whilst they humbled themselves with prayer and fasting, the Philistines, having notice of this general meeting, came in arms, and put them into a great consternation.

The Israelites thus frighted, begged of Samuel to intercede for them to the Lord.

Samuel thereupon took a sucking lamb, offered it whole for a burnt offering, and prayed to the Lord for Israel; whose prayers was so effectual, that, as the Philistines came to attack Israel, at that instant the Lord sent down such a peal of thunder on the Philistines, just as they were ready to engage, as threw them into confusion.

The Israelites, taking advantage of their disorder, gained a mighty victory, and pursued them from Mizpeh beyond Bethshan. From which time the Philistines came not into the country of the Israelites, who recovered the towns those people had taken from them from Ekron to Gath.

(*i*) *Threeſcore and ten.* Some commentators are of opinion, that only seventy of the people died, and that the fifty thousand refers to the Bethshemites, and not to the number of those that were slain.

Be this as it will, we may from hence learn, how extremely dangerous it is to indulge a vain curiosity of prying into those mysteries, which God Almighty has not thought proper to disclose to us.

Samuel,

Samuel, in memory of this great deliverance, set up a monumental stone between Mizpeh and Shen, calling it, Eben-Ezer, that is, the stone of help.

After this, Samuel, for the better administration of justice, took a circuit, through Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, returning every year to Ramah. But growing in years, and unable to travel, he constituted his two sons, *Joel* and *Abiah*, judges over Israel; who, degenerating from their good father, were corrupted with bribes, and acted unjustly.

Upon this, the elders of Israel assembling, went in a body to Ramah, and complained to Samuel. Their cause of complaint was just; but when they took upon them to go farther, and to dictate to Samuel how to redress it, they forfeited his love and God's care.

They wanted, not only their grievances redressed, but to have the form of their government altered, insisting upon Samuel's inability to govern them, by reason of his great age, as much as upon the injustice of his sons. And seeing other nations were governed by kings, nothing would please them, but they must have a king.

This insolent demand was unpleasing to Samuel, who finding he could not dissuade them, consulted the Lord: who ordered him to give them a king, as they desired, but reproached them for their ingratitude both to him and Samuel. And to warn them of the dangerous consequences of rejecting him and Samuel for a king, he gave him instructions to lay before them what they were to expect from this wanton, fickle temper: that he should (*k*) enslave them and their children, by making them subject to all vile offices; that they should be always in arms and tumults, liable to the inconveniencies of a constant war, and attended with heavy taxes; and that then they should cry to the Lord, but he would not hear them.

Though Samuel gave them this solemn warning they persisted in their resolution, positively saying, *We will have a king over us, that we may be like other nations,* * *and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.*

Samuel seeing them so resolute, again consulted the Lord about it, who bid him answer their desire, and make them a king. Upon this Samuel dismissed the elders of Israel to their cities; and since the setting up of a king at that time, was but to

(*k*) *Enslave, &c.* This prediction was verified under the administration of Saul, who though on his first promotion to the government of Israel, he gave omens of a mild and gentle reign; in the latter part, when under the influence of jealousy, and a total distraction of mind, grievously oppressed his subjects, and glutted his full resentment with the innocent blood of thousands.

* *That we also may be like all other Nations.* It seems plain, their motives for asking a king were vanity and ambition; they thought themselves inferior to other nations, because they were destitute of the pageantry of state.

Their sensual desires could not be satisfied, unless they saw a prince set over them, shining in gold and jewels, living in a sumptuous palace, attended with guards richly habited, and appearing in great state: in which they supposed the chief glory of a land to consist.

gratify

gratify the humour of a fickle people, God fitted them with a man extraordinary in his person, being taller by the head and shoulders than any of the people. This was *Saul*, the son of *Kish*, of the tribe of Benjamin, a handsome youth.

Kish's asses being gone astray, he sent his son Saul with a servant to † seek them; who after much wandering about, came to the town of *Ramah-Zophim*, Samuel's residence, without hearing any news of what they sought for. Here Saul's servant said to him, *There is a (e) Seer in this town, who may tell us where the asses are*, Saul approved of what his servant proposed, and went into the town enquiring for the Seer. God had the day before given Samuel notice of Saul's coming, and declared to him he was the person whom he had chosen to be king.

Saul meeting there with Samuel, who was going up to a high place to offer sacrifice, asked him where was the house of the Seer? Samuel, understanding again that he was the person God had appointed to be king, answered, "*I am the Seer: Go up with me to this high place: You shall dine with me to-day, and I will dismiss you to-morrow. As for the asses which were lost three days ago, be not in pain for them, they are found again.* Then he assured him, that all the best things in Israel should be his: and bringing him home with him, he invited thirty persons to bear him company, seating Saul above all the other guests, and also distinguishing him, by setting before him the best of the meat.

Having entertained Saul, Samuel took him to a convenient place of retirement, and had further communication with him there that evening; and early in the morning calling him up, that he might dismiss him, they went out together; and as they were going down towards the end of the city, Samuel bid Saul order his servant to go *(f)* before, but stand still himself for awhile, that he might shew him what God had said concerning him.

The servant being gone out of sight Samuel taking a vial of (*g*) oil, poured it upon the head of Saul, and *(h)* kissed him: adding, that he did this because the Lord had appointed him a prince over his inheritance.

† *Seek them.* He was probably employed in looking after his father's cattle; an employment which was exercised by the greatest personages, in the early ages: and in Judea asses were a considerable part of their substance.

(*e*) *Seer.* So the Prophets were called in those days.

(f) Before. This was with design to let Saul understand, that what Samuel was about to do was by divine appointment; and that when they should come to cast lots among all the tribes, as they after did. Saul might not think he was chosen king by the chance of a lot.

Besides, there may be another reason for Samuel's bidding Saul to send away his servant, viz. lest the people, suspecting Samuel to do this by his own will more than the appointment of God, should mutiny. Therefore it was necessary that this should not be published till Saul was convinced that he was chosen by God himself.

(*g*) *Oil.* Saul was the first king of Israel that was anointed, though unction was in use before, namely when judges were invested in office.

(*h*) *Kissed.* This signified a communication of grace, and a mutual concord between the regal and sacerdotal offices, a kiss being an emblem of friendship and peace. Mariana will have it to be a token of subjection and homage; but in this case (however it may be in others) it could not be so in Samuel towards Saul; for Samuel was prince and prophet; and this act rather seems to make Saul his equal, than his superior.

Then as a token that what he had told him was true, he foretold several particulars which should happen to him in his return. That near Rachel's tomb, he would meet two men, who should inform him that his father's asses were found again; that departing thence, he should meet three men going to Bethel, one of them carrying three kids, the second three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine, and that they should give him two parts thereof.

And lastly, that when he came to the mountain of God, where was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of Prophets, going into the city, where (*h*) the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he should prophesy amongst them.

After this, he ordered Saul to go to Gilgal, where in seven days he might expect to see him, because there Samuel intended to offer a peace-offering. All which signs that Samuel had foretold, Saul found to happen exactly.

And now, though Samuel had thus privately anointed Saul, which no one knew but themselves, yet for the general satisfaction of the people, and that the choice and inauguration of the king might be more public and solemn, Samuel called them before the Lord at Mizpeh, to which place the ark of the Lord was brought, that the choice might be openly made, and declared by casting lots among all the tribes of Israel, to know from which of them the king was to be chosen.

The lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin; and casting the lot again among the families of Benjamin, the lot fell upon the family of Matri, and at last on Saul, the son of Kish. Saul being before assured that the choice would fall on him, was not present at the casting the lot; but the people enquiring of the Lord whether they should fetch him or not, he not only consented, but expressly directed them where to find him.

Accordingly they went for him; and having brought him, they set him among them, where he appeared taller than all the people from the shoulders upward; which Samuel observing, said to them, *Behold him whom the Lord hath chosen; there is none like him among all the people!* At which words the people gave a general shout, saying, "God save the king."

Then Samuel told them the duty of a king, and the manner of governing the kingdom, writing it in a book, and laid it before the Lord. Which done, he dismissed the people, and Saul went home to Gilbeah, attended with a particular company of men, whom God had inclined to wait on him. But there were (*i*) some

(*h*) *The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee.* The accomplishment of this prediction could not fail of convincing Saul, that what the Prophet had done was by the immediate appointment of God; and that the same divine power who had exalted him to the supreme power of Israel, would certainly endow him with all those qualifications necessary to the due execution and discharge of so important a trust; and so it really was, for we are told, *God gave him another heart*, 1 Samuel, x. 9.

(*i*) *Some.* These are called sons of *Belial*, that is, men

some that were not pleased with the choice, though they had desired a king, but despised Saul, and would not make any (*k*) presents to him; which Saul observed, but very prudently at that time (*l*) connived at it.

men of a rebellious, proud, disobedient spirit, who though they had desired a king yet now refuse him; desiring what they had not, and despising what they had. They do not express their contempt of him by name, but do it worse, in a more general way, saying, *Shall* He *save us?*

(*k*) *Presents.* Presenting the king with gifts was one way of recognizing him. The Chaldee paraphrase says, they came not to salute him, which is the same thing; for the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, and carried with it a sign of peace and friendship, of congratulation and joy, and of subjection and obedience. It was a general custom, and still continues among the Eastern nations, to bring presents to their princes, and not approach the throne without them.

(*l*) *Connived.* The Hebrews say he was deaf, that is, seemed or pretended not to hear. In which he was very politick, being unwilling to begin his reign with any tumult, which his just resentment of such an affront might have occasioned: if he had taken any notice of the affront and not revenged it, he had shewn himself mean spirited; and if he had resented it, the people might have been apt to charge him with severity and cruelty.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.

SAMUEL'S FIRST EXPLOIT. SAMUEL'S ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE. SAUL CONQUERS THE PHILISTINES. IS REPROVED BY SAMUEL FOR SACRIFICING IN HIS ABSENCE. EFFECTS OF HIS IMPRUDENT CONDUCT IN DIVERS INSTANCES. GOD MAKES KNOWN HIS DESIGN TOWARDS DAVID TO SAMUEL. DAVID IS ENABLED BY THE DIVINE STRENGTH TO PERFORM MIRACULOUS FEATS OF VALOUR. HE EXCITES THE JEALOUSY OF SAUL, WHO SEEKS HIS LIFE. IS PRESERVED BY JONATHAN.

THE first remarkable action of Saul, after his promotion to the government of Israel, was his conquest over *Nahaſh*, king of the Ammonites, who had besieged (*a*) *Jabeſh-Gilead*, and so distressed the inhabitants, that in consequence of the cruel terms, which he had proposed for shewing them quarter, which were, that every man should have his (*b*) right eye put out They applied to the king of Israel to relieve them from so tyrannical an oppressor.

The people of Jabesh had no more than (*c*) seven days to call in the aid of the Israelites, who in obedience to the king's proclamation, mustered an army of three hundred thousand, which together with the thirty thousand of the tribe of Judah, formed a very powerful body.

Saul, having disposed his forces in three parties, surprized the unprepared Ammonites, at the earliest dawn, and charged them with such fury, that victory soon declared itself in his favour.

This important conquest over so formidable

(*a*) *Jabeſh-Gilead.*] This town lay on the south east-side of Jordan, and not far from the Ammonites who besieged it.

Euſebius and St. *Jerom* tell us, that it existed in their time and was situated on a hill about six miles distant from *Pella*.

It is sometimes in scripture simply called Jabesh.

(*b*) *Right Eye.* As the manner of fighting in those days was chiefly with bow and arrows, sword and shield, the loss of the right eye rendered them incapable of either.

He did not think proper to put out both their eyes, because they would then have been utterly incapable of rendering him any service, or paying him tribute.

(*c*) *Seven Days.* He was so sure of success, that he complied with their request, as he had a contemptable notion of their courage.

Saul, indeed, had been anointed king; but so small a space of time before, that Nahash was persuaded he could not levy an army in so short a space as seven days, and, consequently, that there was no danger in granting them the respite they desired.

formidable and cruel an enemy, greatly enhanced the reputation of Saul, and induced some of his favourites to request, that he would exert the power he had now obtained in the punishment of those who had treated him with indignity at his election; but the king nobly waved such mean revenge, nor would sully the glory of a memorable exploit, by the death of one Israelite, for whom amongst the rest, the Lord had that day wrought so great a salvation.

Saul's signal success afforded Samuel, a very good opportunity of reconciling a late difference amongst the people, by proposing to them a general agreement concerning the validity of his title to the government, as well as confirmation of his election, by an avowed recognizance of his power.

To effect this important design, he summoned a general assembly at Gilgal, and in a very pathetic address, first appealed to them all, as to the integrity of his conduct, during the time of his administration; then charged them with their own ingratitude, and that of their ancestors; and lastly, assured them of the divine resentment, that would inevitably follow the transgression of the divine command, which could be in no instance more flagrant, than in rejecting the government of God, and him under God, and (*d*) desiring a king, when the Lord Omnipotent had undertaken to direct them.

To strike them more deeply with a sense of their atrocious crime, Samuel called down the present vengeance of their offended God in a storm of thunder and rain, at the time of (*e*) wheat-harvest. This extraordinary event terrified them in general, and deeply sensible of their transgression, they intreated Samuel to implore the divine mercy, and interceed with God to avert the judgments they so justly deserved.

Rejoiced at the effect of this miraculous display of Almighty power, he not only promised compliance with their respect; but assured them that he was sincerely disposed to instruct them in their duty, the neglect of which would involve both them and their king in inevitable destruction.

Saul having obtained a complete victory over the Ammonites, dismissed his forces, reserving only three thousand, two of which he retained at *Michmash*, as his own body-guard, and appointed the other for the protection of his son *Jonathan*, at Gibeah.

Jonathan, being a valiant young

(*d*) *Desiring a King.* The divine historian, having informed us how God consented to give his people a king, to shew us that he had not cast off the government, but only transferred the immediate administration to a deputy, and consequently that their king was his viceroy, tell us here, how God was pleased to bring them to repentance in an extraordinary way; the gracious method he commonly employed, when he intended to pardon.

(*e*) *Wheat-Harvest.* The wheat-harvest began in Judea, about the end of June, or beginning of July; in which season thunder and rain were never known, but only in the spring and autumn, one called the former, and and the other the latter rain; and therefore Samuel intended to convince them that this phenomenon was really miraculous; and by convincing them of the Omnipresence of the deity, and his readiness to hear his prayers, shewed them that their folly and their wickedness were equally great in rejecting God for their king, and himself for their Judge.

prince, attacked and cut off a garrison of the Philistines in a neighbouring city; and this being deemed an act of hostility, proved the cause of an open rupture between that people and the Israelites.

In order therefore to avenge themselves of the injury they had sustained from the king's son, the Philistines raised a vast army, which beside an almost innumerable body of foot consisted of *(f)* three thousand chariots, and six thousand horse, with which they proceeded and encamped at Michmash.

Saul therefore by sound of trumpet mustered his forces, and with them encamped at Gilgal, impatiently waiting the arrival of Samuel; but as the prophet tarried longer than was expected, the people were so disheartened by his delay, that they hid themselves in rocks and caves, and not thinking themselves secure even in those retirements, passed the river Jordan.

Saul fearing an attack from the enemy, before he had sent up his prayer to God, from whom alone he could expect success, ordered sacrifices immediately to be made, and the burnt-offering was just finished the moment that Samuel arrived.

As the prophet had previously assured him, that he would be with him at Gilgal within the space of seven days, and the conduct of the king argued both distrust and ingratitude; the prophet severely censured his behaviour, as a heinous breach of God's command, by which he would incur the loss of his kingdom, which should be transferred to a more pious person.

Having thus reprimanded the disobedience of Saul, Samuel left Gilgal, and repaired to Gibeah, where he was followed by the king and his son, with a small army of about six thousand men, and those so badly furnished with military accoutrements, that they were reduced to the necessity of using their implements of agriculture; because the Pilistines had cautiously prevented a *(g)* single smith from residing among them.

During the incampment of the Philistines at Michmash, detachments were sent out from amongst them to plunder the country; and they continued their depredations sometime unopposed; till Jonathan happily inspired with a religious confidence and genuine patriotism, privately withdrew from the camp, attended by his armour bearer only, to

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(f) Three thousand. The Syriac and Arabic read only three thousand: but the Septuagint and Chaldee confirm the printed Hebrew.

This difference might have proceeded, from the omission or insertion of a cypher in the Hebrew or the antient versions; and if we suppose that under the term chariots are comprehended all sorts of wheeled carriages, as well as chariots properly so called, the present reading of the Hebrew may be admitted.

(g) Single Smith. The Philistines, during their forty years tyranny, had taken care to carry away all the smiths out of the country, to prevent them from making themselves weapons of war; but if it seems strange, that after the total overthrow of the Philistines at Eben-Ezer, the Israelites should neglect to restore those artificers, and to furnish themselves with weapons; it should be remembered that those trades, when once lost, are not so easily recovered; especially among a people extremely addicted to sloth and negligence, destitute of iron mines, and wholly intent upon the feeding of cattle.

whom

whom he had imparted his design (*h*) and found means to ascend a steep and craggy rock, which as soon as they had surmounted, they fell most furiously on the Philistines, who had not the least apprehension of an invasion, and through their great surprise, slew twenty of their inveterate foes. This intrepid attack from only two men, put the Philistines into such consternation, that not distinguishing friends from enemies, they fell upon each others swords, and thus became the instruments of their own destruction.

As soon as Saul received intelligence of this confusion in the enemy's camp, he immediately availed himself of the favourable opportunity, and fell upon the disordered Philistines with such fury, that he put them to a total defeat.

But he was unhappily guilty of another flagrant breach of piety and prudence after this auspicious event; for determined on a vigorous pursuit of the enemy, he prohibited his people on the severe penalty of death, from taking any refreshment before night, lest they might be prevented from massacreing their vanquished foes. This rash determination deprived him of every advantage that would otherwise have resulted from the victory; for his people enfeebled by want of sustenance, were obliged to desist from the pursuit, and thereby afforded the enemy an opportunity of escaping to their own country.

To aggravate the ills consequent on this misguided prohibition; the pious and valiant Jonathan, had well nigh fallen a victim to his father's rash vow; for being absent from the camp at the time of the proclamation and therefore ignorant of it, he eat a little (*i*) honey when almost famished, and would have undergone the cruel sentence, had not the people pleaded in his behalf the important share he had in acquiring the honours of the day.

Saul elated with his success, wantonly resolved to pursue the enemy by night; but Samuel advised him to seek direction of God before the execution of his proposal; so that this scheme was entirely given up.

Notwithstanding many improprieties in point of government, he still maintained his regal authority, and the Lord had appointed him to an expedition, which if executed according to his directions, would in some measure have atoned for past miscarriages. The Lord had many years before determined to execute his judgment on the Amalekites for

(*h*) *Design.* How Jonathan and his armour-bearer only, could put the whole army of the Philistines into so universal a consternation, appears at first sight very extraordinary; but when we consider, that they climbed up a way never before attempted,—that they surprised the enemy unawares, and perhaps when the greatest part of them were asleep,—that this army, being composed of different nations, might entertain jealousies and suspicions of each other,—and that the darkness of the night, might make them apprehend, the whole body of the Israelites was come upon them alone, the fright of the Philistines is not so very surprising; and when we add to all this, what is not indeed improbable, that God might at this instant infuse a panic fear into the whole host, our wonder will be turned into praise and adoration, of that powerful Being, who, when he sees fit, can make the greatest heroes tremble, and put to flight the most formidable armies.

(*i*) *A little Honey.* This was wild honey, which is now to be found in great abundance in the deserts of the Holy Land.

opposing

opposing the Israelites in their passage out of the land of Egypt.

Samuel was therefore sent by God, with a commission to Saul in the most peremptory terms, to exterpate the whole race of the Amalekites, men, women and children, and with them every living creature, that could minister to use or sustenance; but instead of punctually complying with the divine command, Saul with his usual impiety, partially (*k*) saved *Agag* king of that people, together with the best of his cattle and many valuable commodities: and when Samuel remonstrated with him on the iniquity of his conduct, to exculpate himself, pretended that he had spared them from the pious motive of offering them as sacrifices to the Lord.

But the Prophet assured that this reserve proceeded from a principle of avarice rather than piety, would not admit of so vain a pretence; first set before his view the heinous nature of his transgression, and then declared to him God's awful determination of transferring the kingdom from his family to a more worthy race, which should punctually obey every command of the king of kings.

Impressed by this declaration, the guilty king, confessed his crime, earnestly begged the pious Prophet, to deprecate in his behalf the divine vengeance, and (*l*) make intercession for him; and also to enhance his reputation among the people (who were ripe for rebellion) to join with him in the solemn worship of God.

Samuel would not join in worship with one who had rejected the word of the Lord, and therefore prepared to depart, when Saul caught hold of the skirt of his mantle; whereupon Samuel prophesied, that the Lord in like manner had rent the kingdom from him.

At length however, Samuel was induced, by his hearty contrition, to comply with his request; but before he departed, he insisted that Agag (who began to entertain hopes of being spared) should be brought to him; which being done, he (*m*) fell upon him; and with his own

(*k*) *Saved Agag.* The exterpation of the Amalekites had been determined by God above four hundred years before this transaction and Balaam in his vision confirms their doom.

The order to cut them entirely off was renewed by God several years afterwards, and agreeable to this order, Saul set out on this expedition. It may be observed also, that they continued inveterate enemies to the Hebrews, and joined with their adversaries, whenever they could, to enslave and destroy them: particularly with the Midianites, Judges, vi. 2, 3, 33. Nay this very order to Saul, utterly to destroy them, seems to have been given, because they had, together with Moab, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines, invaded and spoiled them; chap. xiv. 48.

The Israelites, therefore, had a right to revenge themselves on them, as they were aggressors by the law of nature and nations, and utterly to extirpate them too, if that was necessary for their own preservation; and were obliged to do it, if God commanded them.

God did command it. And will any man dispute the right of God to destroy an incorrigble nation, by pestilence, earthquake, storm or famine? As no sensible persons can deny this, how then can he deny the right of God to destroy them by the sword.

(*l*) *Make Interceffion.* The vulgate renders, "bear "my sin;" the Septuagint and Arabic, "take away my "sin." By sin is meant the punishment due to his sin; and his request to Samuel is, to pray to the deity for him that he might escape that punishment.

(*m*) *Fell upon*, &c. Agag was a cruel tyrant: his sword had made havock amongst his own people, as well as among the Israelites, and his barbarity called aloud for public justice. Saul had refused to do this act of justice, and in sparing him he was guilty of a violation of a command of God: Samuel therefore justly ordered him to be slain that instant.

hand,

hand, hewed him in pieces before the Lord.

After this transaction Samuel departed to his own habitation at Ramah; Saul repaired to his residence at Gibeah, and this proved the last interview between the king and the Prophet.

Such was the regard of pious Samuel for the unhappy Saul, that though he visited him no more, he did not fail *(n)* to lament the deplorable state into which he had fallen.

But during his melancholy reflection, the Lord was pleased to reprove him for mourning over one whom he had rejected for his disobedience, and ordered him to repair to Bethlehem, under pretence of sacrificing there, to invite Jesse and his sons to the feast of the sacrifice, and do as he should there direct them.

Samuel instantly obeyed the divine command, and being demanded on his approach to Bethlehem, whether he came with good intent, he answered, that he came in order to hold a feast of sacrifice unto the Lord.

Having made the necessary preparations, he particularly invited Jesse and his sons; after which, repairing to his house, and observing Eliab the eldest to be a goodly person, he supposed him, at first sight, to be the person appointed by God to succeed Saul in the government of Israel.

But being instructed otherwise by God, and finding that Jesse had another son, who was watching the sheep in the field, he desired he might be immediately sent for, being determined not to institute the feast before his arrival.

When the youth came, Samuel perceived by his comely, yet innocent look, that he was the very person appointed by God to that high office, and therefore, according to the divine instruction, he singled him out from the rest of his brethren, *(o)* poured oil on his head, and anointed him.

From that very instant, David was endowed with the spirit of the Lord, with prudence, courage, and every ornament of body and mind, necessary to compose a great prince.

As David daily grew in the favour of the Lord, Saul declined more and more, the spirit of God departed from him, and his mind was agitated by the most perplexing reflections on his dire circumstances, which frequently deprived him of his reason, and threw him into an absolute frenzy.

To alleviate his grief, some of his attendants, advised him to have re-

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(*n*) *To lament*, &c. He had a sincere value for his country, and therefore could not help lamenting the sad condition of its king.

(*o*) *Poured Oil.* He singled him out from the rest, and privately anointed him; for it is plain, from what is said before, that Samuel was afraid to have it known, and therefore did not anoint him publickly in the midst of his brethren. And by Eliab's treatment of David after this, chap. xvii. 28. it was evident, that he did not know him to be anointed king over Israel.

David himself might be as ignorant of the precise intention of Samuel in this ceremony as his brethren, because it was customary to anoint a person for the prophetick office as well as the regal.

Samuel's not revealing this secret to David shewed his prudence, because, if it had got wind before the proper crisis, it would have endangered both their lives.

course to music, to which, when he consented, one of them recommended David to him, assuring him, he was not only an excellent musician, but possessed of every qualification of body and mind, that could engage his favour; and above all, that the Lord was with him.

In consequence of the advice of his attendants, the youth was brought into the presence of Saul, and Jesse knowing the custom of the court, had provided him with a handsome present, with which, on delivery the king was much pleased, but charmed with his skill on the harp, which for the present, diverted his melancholy thoughts.

Saul at length conceived such esteem for David, that having obtained his father's consent to his continuing with him, in order to attach him to his service, he made him his armour-bearer.

The Philistines, who had lately sustained a total defeat from the army of Saul, having now collected their scattered forces, appeared again in a disposition that portended their design of avenging the late hostilities of the Israelites, being encamped between *Succoth* and *Azekah*, while Saul, with his forces, pitched their tents upon an eminence above the valley of Elah, which separated the two armies.

While the Israelites and the Philistines lay encamped opposite each other, a (*p*) champion, of stupendous bulk and stature, called Goliah, came out of the Philistines' camp, for forty days successively, and challenged any one of the whole army of the Israelites to (*q*) single combat, which should absolutely decide the fate of either army.

This Philistine Colossus, was near ten feet high, and his limbs extremely muscular and nervous, insomuch that he struck every beholder with terror as well as astonishment, and none durst accept his challenge, which he presumptuously offered for so long a succession of time.

At length however the provident defender of Israel raised his own people a deliverer, in the person of young David, who happened at that time to come to the camp with provision for his elder brethren, who were then in the service.

David observing this gigantic Philistine insolently taunt the whole army of Israel, and hearing the prodigious reward the king had promised to any one who should slay him; viz. that he was to give him his own daughter in marriage, and ennoble his family by conferring on them the freedom of Israel, was disposed, as it were, by a divine impulse, to encounter this daring, formidable hero.

His elder brother Eliab, thinking the very pretence, an instance of the highest presumption, took occasion to reprimand him for his rashness.

(*p*) *A Champion.* The Hebrew is, *Ish habbanain*; which the vulgate renders, *One of spurious birth*; the giants being noted for having no regard to marriage; but this is false, for the Hebrew word signifies a man of strength, or courage

(*q*) *Single Combat.* This seems to have been merely a bravado, arising from too great an opinion of his own strength, without any authority from the Philistine army, since after he was slain, they did not submit to be slaves to the Israelites, as he had declared they would, in case he was vanquished.

But

But David waved his brother's choler, by addressing himself to another man, and expressing a steady zeal and unshaken intrepidity for the cause of God, as well as utter contempt of the insolent boastings of the haughty Goliah.

The resolution of this favourite youth, at length reached the ears of the king, who sent for him, and from a motive of real concern, set before him the danger he must inevitably incur by encountering with a man of Goliah's prodigious skill, and long military experience.

But David, to obviate the king's suspicion, informed him that he had performed exploits full as daring as that of engaging with the present Philistine, that he had slain a lion and a bear with his own hand, and now relied on the same Almighty arm to enable him to vanquish the insolent foe, who had set at defiance the armies of God.

The king greatly applauding the pious and brave resolution of David ordered him to be arrayed in his own armour; but finding that upon trial unfit for him, it was put off; and he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones, which together with his sling, composed his offensive weapons.

Thus prepared, he boldly advanced towards his powerful antagonist, who thinking from his youth and diminutive stature, he was opposed to him from mere contempt and derision, could not refrain from cursing him, and threatened at once to dispatch him.

But David proceeded not in that self-sufficient manner, for, on the contrary, he assured the Philistine, that he undertook not to encounter him in his own strength, but that of the mighty God of Israel, whose name he had blasphemed, and whose armies he had impiously defied: and farther, as a proof of his confidence, in the divine aid and direction, he told him, that he should deprive him of his head, and give his body for food to the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field; and that he should be enabled to perform that exploit, in order to demonstrate to an infidel world, the existence and power of an Almighty Jehovah, even the God of Israel.

Nor did he rely on the strength of his God in vain; for standing at a convenient distance from the Philistine, he discharged from his sling a stone, which struck Goliah on his fore-head, pierced his brain, and there remained, so that he fell upon his face; and David, who had no sword, ran up, caught hold of the giant's, and immediately severed his head from his body, to the general joy of the Israelites and their allies, and the utter confusion of the Philistines, who fled before the former, by whom they were pursued unto the gates of Ekron with great slaughter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

SAUL FIRST PROMOTES DAVID, AND AFTERWARDS, THROUGH JEALOUSY SEEKS HIS LIFE. THE STRICTEST FRIENDSHIP IS FORMED BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN, WHO CONCERT DIVERS MEASURES TO PRESERVE HIM FROM THE FURY OF HIS FATHER. THE SCHEME HE HAD LAID TO TREPAN HIM IS DEFEATED BY THE STRATAGEM OF MICHAL. SAUL ENDEAVOURS TO SLAY HIS SON. DAVID SEEKS PROTECTION FROM THE KING OF ACHISH. INSTANCE OF SAUL'S CRUEL RESENTMENT. DAVID'S SUCCESS AGAINST HIS ENEMIES. DEATH OF THE PROPHET SAMUEL.

SAUL astonished at the mighty feat performed by this young hero, enquired of *Abner*, one of his generals, whose son he was? But Abner not being able to resolve him, introduced *David* to the king, with the champion *Goliah's* head in his hand.

The king bestowed the highest praises on his valour, and desiring to know whose son he was? He modestly replyed, *I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Beth-lemite.*

The late glorious action excited the general esteem of the Israelites and their allies; but none evinced such sanguine approbation as Jonathan, who being a prince of innate valour, and intrepid fortitude, was so charmed with his prowess in the important execution, that he entertained the (*r*) sincerest friendship for him, which being mutually cemented by the most endearing ties, ratified by covenant, and Jonathan's present of his robe, sword, belt and bow to David, remained as long as they lived together.

David, for a short time after this exploit, received a peculiar token of Saul's favour, and was appointed to the command of his men of war, which he filled with honour, prudence and reputation.

But Saul's respect for David continued not long, for a circumstance soon fell out, that excited in his suspicious mind, the most burning jealousy.

As David was returning from the slaughter among the vast concourse assembled to behold the entry of their triumphant countrymen, was a company of women, who accompanied musical instruments with a song, the chief burthen of which was, Saul *has slain his thousands, and David his ten-thousands.*

This suggested to Saul's remembrance, what the Prophet Samuel had told him, and as well as excited his fears, that David aspired after his throne: on which account he banished from his mind every sentiment of good-will, and in its room, conceived the most miserable revenge aginst the pious, brave and innocent youth.

From this very instant, Saul resolved on his destruction, which he

(*r*) *Sincerest.* His friendship for him was founded upon the comliness of person, his skill and courage in slaying the Philistine, and his modesty when he appeared before Saul his father.

endeavoured

endeavoured the next day to affect with his own hand. His mind being greatly perplexed, David as usual came to divert his melancholy; and while he was playing the harp before him, not suspecting the least danger, the frantic king darted a javelin at him with all his might; but as David was reserved by Providence, for wise purposes, the king missed his aim, and David immediately withdrew.

After this remarkable event, David was removed from his immediate attendance on the king's person, and degraded to an inferior post in the army, which he filled as much to his own honour, and the approbation of his people, as he had done the first offices of state.

David's conduct in an inferior station, and the reputation which he thence acquired, inflamed the jealousy of Saul, and prompted him studiously to endeavour at his destruction.

By virtue of the king's solemn promise, previous to the encounter with the Philistine giant, David had an undoubted claim to one of his daughters in marriage; but meek in temper, he rested content with the honours already conferred upon him; nor had Saul conceived any intention of fulfilling that part of his promise, till he thought it might prove the most effectual method of sating his implacable revenge.

Accordingly, sending for David, he informed him of his design to bestow his daughter upon him, as a condition of his executing a commission that was attended with the utmost hazard of his life.

David modestly evaded the proposed honour, alledging the meanness of his family. Saul therefore embraced this opportunity of avoiding compliance with his promise, and gave his elder daughter *Morab* in marriage to *Adriel*, the son of *Barzillia*.

Michal, Saul's second daughter, had conceived a real affection for David, of which the king being conscious, and in order to prosecute his former malicious scheme, he promised her in marriage to him, desiring no other compensation than that he should slay an hundred Philistines, and produce their fore-skins in court, before him.

David imagining that the king was desirous of putting his valour to the test once more, without the least suspicion of the latent malice of the terms, readily acquiesced, and selecting some of the best men in the Israelitish army, marched at their head, attacked the Philistines *(s)* slew double the number stipulated by the king, within the time he had prescribed, and as an undeniable testimony of his having fulfilled the terms, presented their fore-skins at court; so that having thus gallantly accomplished all things, the king could not refuse him his daughter, who re-

(s) Slew double. Josephus makes Saul's demand, and the number which David brought to be six hundred. The Septuagint, instead of two hundred, read one hundred, in order to make it correspond with the number which Saul demanded, but we have followed the Hebrew.

warded his merit with the purest affection.

Various circumstances combining to inflame the jealousy and resentment of Saul, he cast off all disguise, engaged his whole family in executing his malicious design, and commanded Jonathan his son, and all his attendants by any means to dispatch the detested David.

Jonathan, whose soul disdained such ingratitude and inhumanity to any deserving person, much more towards his avowed friend, took care to give him timely notice of the threatening storm, advising him to retire to some secure place till the morning, when he would take an opportunity of expostulating with his father, and transmit to him a particular account of his success. Jonathan, according to his proposal, set before his father both the unreasonableness and impiety of his design upon innocent David, who merited every good office at his hands, that Saul according to outward appearance was reconciled to David, and Jonathan next day introduced him into his presence, in the same respectable light as before.

But as the renown of David's exploits in divers conquests over the Philistines spread daily, and consequently added fuel to the resentment still latent in the breast of Saul, a short time proved this reconciliation to be mere pretence. Of this he gave evident demonstration, for being seized with another fit of melancholy, David was sent for to play to him, and as before, while he was innocently endeavouring to amuse him, he again darted a javelin at him, which David avoided by nimbly changing his situation, and afterwards made his escape; but to the rancour of his design it is recorded that he smote the javelin in the wall.

Enraged at these repeated disappointments, he commanded a detachment of his guards, to beset his house at day-break and slay him. But Michal, his wife, acquainted him with the design, and proposed to let him down from a window; which being done, by favour of the night, he once more escaped the malicious design of Saul; and to prevent the suspicion of the guards, Michal told him he was sick in bed, having artfully substituted in his room an image, with which the king was much incensed; but his daughter pleaded the most justifiable causes for her conduct.

David hastened, as much as the night would permit him to his friend and counsellor, Samuel at Ramah, to whom he communicated the particulars of what had passed between him and Saul, hoping that God by this means might direct him how to proceed in his intricate situation.

At the advice of the prophet, for his better security, he repaired together with him to (*t*) *Naioth*, where they both lived some time.

But the emissaries of the enraged king no sooner informed him of the

(*t*) *Naioth*. The Chaldee renders this as if it was an appellative, "the school of learning." This was one of the schools of the prophets.

spot

spot to which David had repaired for security, than notwithstanding the sanctity of the place, he sent a party to apprehend him. But when they arrived at the sacred place, heard Samuel instructing the other prophets, they where seized with a prophetic spirit and returned not.

After these other messengers were dispatched; but they no sooner approached the venerable spot, than they were affected in the same manner with the former.

Having proceeded in this manner three times successively, and received no satisfactory intimation, he at length went down himself; but when he drew near Naioth, he was influenced by the same divine power, and continued to prophecy, till he reached the place where Samuel and David had retired, when stripping off his upper garment, he humbly lay on the ground that day and the ensuing night.

David availed himself of this opportunity of leaving Saul at the school of the Prophets, escaping to his friend Jonathan, and consulting with him how to avert the resentment of his father, who thus indefatigably sought his life.

Jonathan not only assured him of his best services, but that he would take every possible measure to discover the intention of his father, and immediately acquainted him therewith; but to strengthen his confidence in him, he solemnly renewed the covenant of friendship that was between them; and having directed him to conceal himself in a certain place for a few days, till he could judge whether he should still lay hid, or might with safety again appear in public, which he was to signify by shooting an arrow; they cordially embraced, and then parted.

As the season approached for the celebration of the *(u)* feast of the new moon, Saul, according to custom, came from Naioth to attend that solemnity; and after he was seated, taking a view of the company, he observed that David's place was vacant, for two days successively. This occasioned him to enquire the cause, wherefore the son of Jesse (a title of contempt) absented himself from the feast.

Jonathan answered his father in excuse for his friend, that he had obtained from him leave of absence, in order to be present at the anniversary feast, held by his own family at Bethlehem.

Saul who well knew the inviolable friendship that subsisted between David and his son, and suspected that what he urged in his excuse was mere pretence, most rancourously upbraided him with taking into his bosom, one who endeavoured to supplant him and his family, in that which they held most dear, namely the throne of Israel; insisting at the

(u) *The Feast of the New Moon.* The Israelites performed solemn sacrifices every new moon, and after the sacrifice feasted together: and David, being one of the king's family, by marrying his daughter, used to eat with him on these occasions; and he thought that Saul, by being inspired by the Spirit of God at Naioth, might possibly have forgot his anger, and make a favourable enquiry after him.

same

same time, that he should bring him before his presence, as he was resolutely determined on his death.

So noble, so generous was the friendship of Jonathan, that notwithstanding this flagrant instance of his father's inveterate hatred against the object of it, he still interposed in his behalf, enquiring of him, what David had done to deserve death?

This behaviour in Jonathan so incensed his father, that forgetting the ties of natural affection, in the vehemence of his frenzy, he (x) threw a javelin at his son, cruelly desirous of avenging on him the frequent disappointments of his designs upon David.

But Jonathan avoided the stroke, and persuaded from his conduct, and even confession, of the continuance of his resolution upon the life of David, he went next morning with his bow into the field, gave the signal for his friend to appear, and having communicated to him what had passed between him and his father, as well as warned him, at all events, to escape for his life; they renewed their protestations of eternal friendship, (y) embraced, and departed.

David thus warned by his friend Jonathan, betook himself to *Nob*, a city belonging to the priests, where stood the tabernacle at that time, in order to enquire of the Lord by means of *Ahimelech* the priest, what course he should take in his present wandering condition.

Ahimelech who knew the dignity of his rank, but was ignorant that he was out of favour with the king, expressed his surprise at his arriving thus unattended; David concealed the true cause, and pretended to the High-Priest, that he was dispatched by the king on a secret expedition in such haste, that he had neither time to furnish himself with arms nor provision, desiring at the same time, he would spare him some or whatever food was at hand. Ahimelech informed David, that at present he had no common bread, but as the case was urgent, he gave him some consecrated bread. Having thus appeased his hunger, David enquired if he had any arms in his possession; upon which he offered him (z) Goliah's sword, the most acceptable weapon with which he could have presented him, as he himself acknowledged there was none like it.

David having thus found means to procure some necessaries from Ahimelech, departed from Nob, having received intelligence, that *Doeg*, the king's huntsman was there; who would certainly disclose the interview to Saul. Difficult of his security in

(x) *Threw a Javelin.* Saul had always a javelin or spear at hand to execute his evil purposes, because spears were the sceptres of those ages, which kings always carried in their hands.

(y) *Embraced.* This adieu is the most pathetic and tender that ever was prescribed. There was reason for David to exceed in sorrow, as he was now to become an exile from his friends, from his wife, from his parents, from his kindred, from the people of God, and from all sacred solemnities.

(z) *Goliah's Sword.* It was usual in ancient times, to hang up the trophies taken in war, in the place set aside for the worship of God, thereby intimating that it was in consequence of the divine interposition, that they obtained the victory, and as the temple of Jerusalem, was not yet built, no place could be so proper as this. And David's taking the sword away, could not be said to be a profanation

any

any part of Saul's dominions he proceeded to Gath, but remained not long there before he was discovered and pointed at, as the mighty warrior of Israel, who had so frequently signalized himself against the Philistines; so that to prevent information, he feigned insanity, and sustained the part of a lunatic, which he assumed, with such skill and address, as evaded the suspicion of the king, and gave him an opportunity of flying to (*a*) *Adullam*, where he was visited by all his relations, and applied to by about four hundred men, male-contents and desperadoes, to take the lead of them, who would resolutely follow his fortune, whithersoever he went. Pious David, after his family had thus joined him, fearing that the resentment of Saul would fall upon his aged parents, from a filial concern for their safety, put both himself and them under the protection of the king of Achish, who was then at enmity with Saul.

With this prince they dwelt untill the prophet of Gad (who attended David) advised him to quit Moab, and return to the land of Judah, where he departed, and took up his station in the forest of *Hareth*.

It appeared at this time that Saul was at Ramash, and having received intelligence of the people, who had enlisted under the banner of David, he upbraided his attendants with want of loyalty, in that none of them would assert his cause against the son of Jesse, who, together with his own son, had conspired against his person and government.

The people to whom he addressed himself, conscious of their innocence, made no reply; but Doeg, who had seen David with Ahimelech, the High-Priest, (*b*) gave Saul information of every particular circumstance that had passed between them.

Saul willing to embrace any pretence, in order to avenge himself on David, or any that were attached to his cause, summoned Ahimelech, and all the priests, who were in Nob, to appear before him. The priests not suspecting the king's cruel design, obeyed the royal mandate, and as soon as they came into his presence, he addressed himself more particularly to Ahimelech, demanding of him the cause, wherefore he assisted the son of Jesse with provision, and advice, and thereby enabled him to prosecute his design of supplanting him in his regal authority?

Ahimelech conscious of his innocence, alledged (*c*) the great merit of David, both as related to the king

(*a*) *Adullam.* *Adullam* was a town in the tribe of Judah, of considerable note: and near it was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave naturally strong and fortified, and into this cave David retreated. Most of the mountains of Palestine were full of caverns, whither the inhabitants of the villages generally retired for safety in the time of war.

(*b*) *Gave Saul information, &c.* It does not appear likely from the preceeding chapter, that Ahimelech or the priests knew any thing of Saul's displeasure against David, and his determined purpose to destroy him; and therefore as he was the king's son-in-law, and Ahimelech thought he was sent on some hasty errand by the king, the giving him bread and sword was what he owed in duty to Saul, instead of its being an act of treason.

(*c*) *In Vindication.* Ahimelech abundantly shewed his innocence. Saul's charge was, that he had conspired with David against him. What proof does he alledge? That he had given him bread and a sword, and had enquired of God for him. What was his vindication? "And who amongst all thy servants, is like David, faithful, and the king's son-in-law, and goes at thy bidding, &c."

and as a mighty warrior in Israel, which were indispensible motives with him for compliance with his request; and added, that he was wholly ignorant of the king's conceiving any displeasure against him at that time.

Though the plea of the high-priest was so just and equitable, Saul determined to sate his revenge on the innocent priest and his whole brotherhood, and therefore ordered some of his attendants to slay them, because they had not given him information of the place to which David had fled.

The guards having heard Ahimelech's defence, declined the execution of so barbarous a commission: Doeg therefore being present, undertook the bloody office, and with a sacrilegious hand, slew no less than four-score and five of the priests of the Lord. Nor did this cruel scene sate the blood-thirsty Saul; for sending a party to Nob, he commanded them to put every living soul, together with all the cattle of the field to the destructive sword.

One of the sons of Ahimelech, named *Abiathar*, escaped this horrid massacre, and flying to David related to him the dreadful tidings, which though he deplored more bitterly, because he looked on himself as the innocent cause, afforded him not much surprise, as he had seen Doeg there, knew he was acquainted with all that had passed relative to him, and that he would inform the king, whose frantic rage might lead him to the commission of the most enormous actions. However he assured Abiathar of his favour and protection, that he should share his fortune, and that he would hold his interest equally dear with his own.

While Saul was cruelly employed in the massacre of his guiltless subjects, David was exerting himself in the just and necessary defence of the right of his country; for having received intelligence, that the Philistines had made a descent upon *Keilah*, a city of Judah, and consulted the divine direction by the prophet Gad, he marched to its relief, and repulsed the enemy with great loss of men and cattle.

Saul having received intelligence of David's success against the Philistines, and concluding that he would fortify himself in the city he had relieved, sent an army to invest it. But David, who never undertook any enterprize without seeking that wisdom which is from above, caused young Abiathar to lay the case before the Lord, who warned them of the perfidy of the inhabitants, and gave them to understand, that if they continued there, they would be delivered into the hand of Saul.

David therefore, pursuant to the divine direction, left that place, and retired into a wood in the desert of *Ziph*, where he was preserved from the vengeance of Saul, who could not learn the place of his retirement.

But his good friend Jonathan having private notice of his situation, visited him, and encouraged him with an assurance that the Lord would not suffer him to fall into the hands of his enraged father, seeing he had reserved him for the government of Israel,

Israel, and the protection of his chosen people. Then renewing their covenant of friendship, they embraced, Jonathan returned home, and David continued in the wood.

The inhabitants of the place, near which David had retired, very officiously sent Saul intelligence where he was, assuring him if he would send a sufficient party to assist them, they would deliver David into his hands. Saul acknowledged their proffered service, but desired that they would most carefully explore his haunts, as he knew him to be very subtle in all his proceedings, and having done this, return and inform him of the particulars. But David apprized of the base design of the Ziphites shifted his quarters, and retired farther into the desert of *Moan*, whither he was so closely pursued by Saul, that nothing but a valley separated the two armies; Saul therefore relying on the superiority of his number, determined to encompass the mountain where David encamped, in order to take or slay his whole party; however he was diverted from the execution of this plan, by the arrival of a messenger, who brought word that the Philistines had invaded the land, and that his assistance was immediately required. Thus was Saul at this critical juncture compelled to drop his private resentment for the public weal, and by diverting his arms to repel the invader, he afforded David an opportunity of retiring into the strong holds of *Engedi*.

Saul soon repulsed the Philistines and then renewed his pursuit of David, with three thousand chosen men, amongst the most mountainous and craggy places of the country. As Saul was on his march, he happened to turn into a cave to ease nature, little suspecting he was so near David, who with a few select men had retired thither for safety.

When David's men saw the king enter the cave alone, thinking that Providence had ordained this circumstance for their rescue, they were for dispatching him immediately; but David was influenced by other motives, and declared his abhorrence of the very attempt to execute their proposal, saying, *God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed.*

However to convince Saul, that his life had been in his hand, he privately cut off the skirt of his robe.

This action, though in itself inoffensive, gave David much concern on reflection, because he thought he had offered an indignity to the majesty of his king. As soon as Saul left the cave, David likewise came out, and calling to him at a distance, reverently bowed before his Lord and King, shewed him the skirt of his robe and declared his innocence in such submissive, yet generous terms, as impressed the obdurate heart of Saul, who bursting into tears, with the utmost compunction, acknowledged his guilt and David's justice. Then, as if convinced from the great deliverances God had wrought for David it was his will he should succeed to the throne of Israel, he conjured him by the most sacred ties not to avenge on him or his family the

the wrongs he had done him, when he should have it in his power.

To obviate all fear on the part of Saul, David sware unto him, he would do according to his desire, upon which Saul returned home; but David not judging it safe to rely on his specious behaviour, retired again with his people to their strong holds.

About this time died the Prophet Samuel, a person in great reputation among the Hebrews, for his probity and virtue; and the people gave an eminent proof of the esteem they had for him, in the magnificence and expence of his funeral.

They buried him at Ramah, in his own country, and mourned for him afterward a long time, not with the ceremony of a formal public sorrow, but every individual had a distinct and a particular share in the loss; for he was a man of a natural benignity and justice, and most remarkably in God's favour for his virtues.

After the death of Eli, he governed twelve years alone; and then in the reign of Saul, eighteen years more *.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

DAVID'S EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE WITH NABAL, AFTER WHOSE DECEASE HE MARRIES HIS WIFE ABIGAIL. REPEATED INSTANCE OF DUTY IN DAVID TOWARDS SAUL. DAVID REPAIRS TO GATH. SAUL DESTROYS THE WITCHES, AFTERWARDS SEEKS TO ONE. SAMUEL IS RAISED AND FORETELS THE RUIN OF SAUL. DAVID MEETS WITH A DISTRESSFUL CIRCUMSTANCE. OVERCOMES HIS ENEMIES. DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

THERE lived at that time near the place where David frequented, a certain man, of the city of *Moan*, who was very wealthy in herds and possessions; who had in his ground three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats.

David was so much his friend, that he set his own people to assist in looking after his flocks: forbidding them on their peril, either for hunger, or on any other pretence whatever, to touch so much as one hair of them; no, though they were absolutely sure of not being detected; continually inculcating to them the duty and obligation they lay under of living according to the rules of justice, and in

conformity

* Thus died the great Prophet Samuel, to whose memory, the author of the Ecclesiasticus, has consecrated this eulogy; "Samuel the Prophet of the Lord, beloved of his Lord, established a kingdom, and anointed princes over his people. By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation, and the Lord had respect unto Jacob. By his faithfulness he was found a true Prophet, and by his word he was known to be faithful in vision. He called upon the mighty Lord, when his enemies pressed upon him on every side, when he offered the sucking lamb. And the Lord thundered from Heaven, and with a great noise made his voice to be heard. And he destroyed the rulers of the Syrians, and all the princes of the Philistines. Before his long sleep he made protestations in the sight of the Lord and his anointed, and after his death he prophesied, and shewed the king his end. *Eccle.* xlvi. ver. 13. &c.

conformity to the will of God, who was never pleased with any man that coveted, or laid violent hands on the goods of his neighbour.

By this discipline, David restrained those about him from violence, and kept them within bounds; imagining all this while that the kindness he had shewn, and the good and generous offices he had done, were conferred on a person of worth and honesty, who would be sure to make him grateful acknowledgments, and a suitable return.

But Nabal (for that was the man's name) was a brutal, ill-natur'd wretch; yet the husband of a notable, discreet, prudent and agreeable woman. As he was one day shearing his sheep, David sent ten of his people to Nabal with the compliment of a thousand good wishes to him, and desiring only some moderate supply of provisions out of his abundance; for his shepherds could inform him, that all the while they had been together in the desert, they had been so far from doing him any injury, that they had rather kept and preserved his sheep for him; closing the discourse with an assurance, that what friendship soever he should do for David upon this occasion, should be abundantly acknowledged.

The answer that Nabal returned them was rude and churlish like himself. *David!* says Nabal, *why who's that same David, I wonder?* They told him he was one of the sons of *Jesse*. *Yes, yes,* says Nabal, *your runaway servants look upon themselves to be brave fellows, I warrant ye.*

This contemptuous affront enraged David to that degree, that he immediately put himself at the head of four hundred men, leaving two hundred more behind with the baggage, (his number being now encreased to six hundred) with a vow and determination that night, to cut off Nabal, with his house and family.

Now David's indignation against him, was not so much for his barbarity and ingratitude, where he had been so frankly obliged, but for the virulence of so insolent an outrage against a man that never did him an injury.

While matters were in this posture, one of Nabal's shepherds and servants carried the story of this encounter to the mistress; telling her, how David being distressed for provisions, and having sent to her husband to desire some small relief of him, who was not only refused by him, but answered with unsufferable and opprobrious revilings; though David had ever dealt honourably and respectfully by him in guarding and securing his flocks from injuries and violence; telling her further, what apprehensions they had of the mischief that the sense of this indignity might bring upon herself and her husband.

So soon as Abigail, (for that was her name) the wife Nabal, had heard their story, she presently called for the asses out; caused them to be laden with presents, and unknown to her husband, (who was at that time drunk and senseless) she put herself upon the way to find out David, whom she met coming down the

straits of the mountain, and four hundred men following him, with an intent to take vengeance upon Nabal.

Abigail no sooner saw him approach, but leaping from her ass, she threw herself prostrate upon the ground, and *humbly besought David to pass over the words of her husband, as one whose name was suited to his nature:* Nabal in Hebrew signifying a fool and a madman. *She pleaded for herself, that she saw none of the messengers, that were sent to her husband; begged pardon, and desired David to give God thanks for sending her as the instrument to keep his hands from blood: and, Sir, says she, may you still preserve yourself clear of that polution, that God may turn the vengeance that threatens Nabal upon the heads of your enemies. Be pleased, I beseech you, to accept of the good-will of your poor servant, with these small presents and upon my humble request, to pass over the offence of my husband, who has so justly incurred your displeasure; for there is nothing so well becoming the character of the person, that providence designs for a crown, as clemency and compassion.* David was pleased to receive the present, telling her, *That she had reason to bless God that put it into heart to meet him; otherwise* says he, *you should never have lived to have seen another day; for I had sworn to myself to lay your house in ruins this very night, and not to leave one soul alive in the family of that ungrateful man, who had cast so many indignities upon me, and those that belong to me.*

You are now come in a blessed hour to allay my rage, and put a stop to my resolution; but yet after all, though I am content for your sake to forgive Nabal's fault against me, there is a judgment still behind that attends him; and his ill-manners will be his ruin some other way.

With these words, David discharged *Abigail*, who went directly home, and found her husband carousing among his companions, and so sottishly drunk with wine, that there was no speaking to him that night: but the next morning, when he became sober, told him the whole story from beginning to end; which struck him with such an astonishment, that he was seized with a dead palsy upon it, and died in ten days.

David upon the news of his death, was heard to say, that the judgment was righteous, and that God had avenged his cause, while he that received the injury came off with clean hands. (*d*)

After the decease of the husband, David sent a message, and an invitation to Abigail, desiring her to come over to him; for he would take her for his lawful wife. Her answer was, that she was not worthy so much as to wash the feet of David; but she went to him: however, with all her equipage, and became his wife; an honour that she was indebted to

(*d*) The world may gather from this example, that there's no avoiding the stroke of divine justice; and that it is Providence that governs the world, not fortune or chance: but that both good and wicked men are either rewarded or punished in their own kind.

for

for the graces both of her mind and person; for it was her prudence, modesty, and beauty, that recommended her to this preferment.

David had also a former wife, (*Ahinoam*) but as for his late wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, her father gave her away to *Phalti*, the son of *Laish* of *Gethla*.

It was not long after this, when the men of *Ziphe* brought a fresh account to Saul, that David was come into their quarters again, and that with a little help he might be easily taken. Upon this intelligence, Saul immediately marched thither with three thousand men; and the night coming on, he pitched his tents at a place called *Hachilah*.

When David, came to understand that Saul was moving that way, he sent out scouts for a particular information where the enemy lay; and word being brought that they had posted themselves near a place called Hachilah, David, got up in the night, and with only *Abishai*, the son of his sister *Zeruiah*, and Ahimelech the Hittite, went directly without the privity of any other person, into the camp of the enemy; where they found the king in his tent, with his general Abner, and his guards about him, all fast asleep.

Abishai, seeing the king in his bed, and his lance by him, would needs have nailed him immediately to the ground; but David held his hands, and (*e*) said, Abishai, *Saul is God's king, and his person sacred, let the man be never so wicked, he is only accountable for the ill management of his power to him who gave him the power itself.*

But for a proof, however, that I have him at mercy, though I will not make a bad use of the advantage, I will now take away his lance, and pitcher of water from his bed-side.

David leaving the camp as silently and unperceived as he came into it, and betwixt the darkness of the night, and the strength of his own resolution, without any apprehension of danger, passed the river; and then getting up to the top of a mountain, within hearing of the camp, he called out from thence to Abner and the guards, to wake them. Abner started upon this clamour, and hearing himself called by name, cried with a loud voice, to know who it was that would speak with him? Answer was made, it was David the son of Jesse, one of your fugitives. *Are you a fit man replied David, to be a prince's favourite; a general of his army, and to take upon you the guard of his royal person, and under all these honourable oblations, to lay sleeping at your ease, when your master's life is in danger? Can you tell me what is become of the king's lance, and the pitcher of water that were this night taken by the enemy out of his tent; and even from his very bed's-side? and you, and your guards fast asleep, without knowing any thing of the*

(*e*) *Abishai, says.* When we consider the just foundations of David's resentment against Saul, and the arguments and instigations of Abishai, we cannot help thinking, that God put these opportunities in the power of David, on purpose to make a trial of his virtue and clemency: nor can we, at the same time, fail to admire the glorious conquest which he made over these passions, which too many others would probably have proved irresistable.

matter?

matter? Now whether this were neglect or treachery, it is equally the same, you certainly deserve to lose your head for it.

When Saul found it was David's voice, and himself now a second time betrayed, into the hands of a very person, whose life he himself was seeking, mistaking the best friend he had, for the most mortal of his enemies; Saul, I say, was so sensible of David's goodness, under the greatest of provocations, that *he gave him public thanks for his life; bidding him not to fear for the time to come, but to return to his habitation; for he found by experience, that his life was not dearer to himself than it was to David; whom now he should look upon as his preserver, and a person of so tried and unchangeable affection to him, that notwithstanding all banishments, hazards, ill usage, loss of friends, and many attempts upon his life, he returned him nothing but benefits for injuries.*

David, desired him to send for the lance and the pitcher, appealing to the righteous God, to judge between them, and to bear him witness, that when he took away Saul's lance and pitcher, he could with as much ease have taken away his life.

After this deliverance, Saul returned safe to his palace. But David not chusing to venture himself any longer in a place where he thought himself still in danger of being taken, removed with his six hundred men into the land of the Philistines, to dwell there, with the consent of his people.

Being now come to Achish, the king of Gath, one of the five principal cities belonging to the Philistines, the king entertained David, and his two wives, *Ahinoam* and *Abigail.*

Saul all this while had notice of David's motions; but after two disappointments already, and falling into the very snare himself that he had set for David, he left his adversary to take his fortune, and, desisted from the pursuit.

David found himself uneasy in the city of Gath, and so took the freedom to desire of the king this addition to his former bounties; that he would be pleased to assign him some place or portion of ground in his dominions, for himself and those that belonged to him, to live upon; for it gave him some uneasiness, to continue still in a place where he must appear burdensome to the people. So the king gave him Ziklag to himself and his heirs for ever; and David retained so great a kindness for the place, even after he came to be king, as to reserve it for a private possession for himself and posterity ever afterwards.

David's stay in Ziklag was four months and twenty days, whence he made several inroads upon their neighbours, the Geshurites, the Gezerites and Amalekites, carrying away vast booties of mules and camels; but taking no prisoners, for fear they should discover the whole mystery to Achish. He made the king presents, however, out of the spoil, who would ask him now and then, where he met with all that pillage. His answer was, that he had made incursions into the southerly parts

parts of Judea, and there he found it. There was no great difficulty to make Achish believe a story that his heart was so desirous to have true; for it was reasonable to think, that after all this havock and outrage committed by David upon his countrymen, he would never dare to look homeward again; and by that means have nothing left to trust to, but the service of king Achish.

The Philistines were about this time preparing for a war against the Israelites, and a general rendezvous appointed upon such a day, in Shunem, where Achish was to draw them into a body, and thence to lead them out against the enemy. The king spoke to David also to join him, with his six hundred men over and above his own troops; who not only promised it with great readiness, but told Achish further, that the time was now at hand, that would put it into his power to make him an honourable return for all his bounties.

The king, on the other hand, passing his royal word to David, the more to oblige him, that if he succeeded in this battle, he would invest him with great honours, and in particular give him the command of his guards.

It is to be observed, that Saul had banished all diviners, sooth-sayers, fortune-tellers, and all other people whatsoever, of such vain pretensions out of his dominions; but the Prophets he still retained.

News being brought to Saul, that the Philistines were advanced as far as *Shunem*, and encamped upon the plain there, he went out to meet them, and drew up near the mountain of *Gilboah*, directly opposite the camp of the enemy.

The armies being now in sight of each other, Saul found the Philistines so much superior to the Israelites, that his heart misgave him; and this terror put him upon consulting the Prophets about the event of this battle. The question being put, but no answer returned, the silence of the oracle was worse to Saul than all the rest; for he looked upon it as a foreboding presage of an evil fate at hand, that he fell into a downright despondency upon it; and yet, such was the hardness of his heart, that though God had withdrawn his favour from him in such a signal manner, and he himself conscious of it, he had still recourse, after all this to conjurors and wizzards, to learn the event of things, and set people at work to find him out some cunning woman, who could foretel things to come; for there were a sort of people that took upon them to call upon the ghosts of the dead, and thereby to resolve such questions about future contingencies as the querists should please to ask them.

While he was upon this enquiry, one of his family informed him, that he had heard of such a woman at *Endor*. Upon this information, Saul disguised himself, and taking two confidents along with him, went directly to the woman of Endor, without acquainting any other person.

The first thing he asked of her was, as a trial of her skill, in cal-

ling upon the ghost of such a person as he should name. The woman excused herself, out of a reverence to the king's edict, which had forbidden this way of divination, upon pain of banishment; wherefore she besought him not to betray her into a snare, for if she should pretend to give a resolution, and be detected, the practice would infallibly be her ruin.

But this refusal would not satisfy Saul, who pressing her still more and more, with bitter imprecations upon himself, that no mortal should ever know of one syllable that passed between them, either question or answer; she was prevailed upon at last to venture herself upon the credit of such assurances, that she was safe in his hands.

Immediately upon her consenting to his request, Saul bad her call up the ghost of Samuel. And upon her calling him up, the ghost appeared. The woman was under an astonishment at the sight of so divine a figure, and turning toward Saul, asked him, *If he were not Saul the king?* Saul made answer, *That he was the man; and observing her to be trembling, and in disorder, desired to know; what might be the cause of that confusion.* She answered, *She saw the resemblance of an ancient man, with a radiant glory about him, ascending from the earth.* Saul demanded of her what kind of figure, of what years, and in what habit he seemed to be? she said, *A man in years, of a venerable aspect, and in a sacerdotal vest.* By this description Saul concluded it to be the figure of Samuel, and fell down upon his face and worshipped. *The spectre demanded what he gave him this trouble for, to take him from his place of rest?* Saul replied, *That it was absolute necessity; for he was threatened with a mighty army, and wanted advice what to do; for God had forsaken him, and he had neither prophets, dreams, nor visions to fly to for direction. For these reasons, he had now recourse as he said, to Samuel, as his last refuge, and a person that he had ever found favourable to himself and his affairs.* Samuel foreseeing that Saul had but one day more to live, told him, *How vain a thing it was for him who knew himself forsaken of God, to launch out into unseasonable curiosities, about what should hereafter become of him. But,* says the ghost, *since nothing else will serve your turn, I am to tell you, that the Almighty God has determined that David shall be put into possession of the government, and bring the present war to a happy conclusion, while you yourself are to lose your crown, and your life together, for your disobedience to God in the business of the Amalekites, and for the contempt of his commands, which from my lips you received by his order, while I was living.*

Know further, that you are to be with me to-morrow; your army shall be overthrown, and yourself and your sons fall in the battle.

These awful words struck Saul speechless, and fainting, he fell to the ground; whether this proceeded from so dreadful a sentence, or from weakness of body, may be a question,

The Royal Psalmist

tion, though most probably the latter, for he had eat nothing for twenty-four hours. But at last coming a little to himself, the woman very earnestly pressed him to take some refreshment to support nature; desiring no other consideration for the dangerous office she had performed him, than to put him in a condition of strength and ability to return to his army.

She was thoroughly sensible of the hazard she had run in the exercise of a forbidden profession; and especially in the violation of a decree at the desire (though inadvertently) of him that made it.

After a great many importunities, in the depth of his despondence, Saul was prevailed on to take some nourishment. Accordingly, the woman though poor, killed her only calf, dressed it, and set it before Saul and his servants, with her whole fortune in that treat; who took his repast, and returned that night to the army.*

The Philistines having drawn their troops together from all quarters, according to their distribution into tribes, kingdoms, and governments, Achish the king of Gath, with his men after the rest, and David with his band of six hundred after Achish; several of the Philistine commanders taking notice of a mixture of Israelites among them, enquired from whence they came; who sent for them? and what they did there? Achish made answer, *That the young man, (pointing to David) was a servant of Saul's, who was fallen under his displeasure, and forced to fly for his life.*

He came to me, says Achish, with the people he has about him, for sanctuary; so I received him, and provided for him; and now upon this occasion he has promised me his utmost assistance against Saul, in requital for his protection, and to gratify his revenge.

The Philistines were one and all against trusting a professed enemy, and were rather for sending him back for they did not know, they said, what mischief the treachery of such a party might do upon such an occasion. And for the difference betwixt him and his master, the service he might do him upon this opportunity, would compound for forty such breaches; wherefore Achish should do well, they said, to consi-

* I must not pass over the candour, the good-nature, and the greatness of the woman's mind, without some note of admiration. The king had forbidden her the practice of an art that was the only maintenance of herself and family.

Here comes a guest and a stranger to her, that she had never seen before; but a person in misery, and one that had need of her advice in the way that he himself had forbidden: for it proved to be the king. She received him, treated him, and relieved him; and all this she did willingly and cheerfully; nay, and so frankly too, that she gave him all she had, and without any prospect or contemplation of a reward, by gaining the king's favour; for she knew, he was doomed to die; beside that over and above the piety of these offices, she did all this for the very man whose prohibition had been the ruin of her. This proceeding was quite contrary to the custom of the world, that makes charity an interest, and gives or relieves only to get by the bargain, putting out virtue, as they do money, to interest. We may reckon that we have recommended to us in the great example of this generous woman, the honour and humanity of doing good offices to all people in necessity; beside that, a sincere and unaffected charity, is a virtue of all others the most acceptable in God's sight.

sider what he was doing, and without more words to send him back to the habitation he had assigned him; for this was the David, they said, that the virgins cried up so in their songs, for killing so many thousands of the Philistines. Achish could not oppose the force and reason of the objection; and therefore he thought fit to take David aside, and converse with him upon that subject, saying:

Young man, upon the certain proof and experience that I have received of your fidelity and courage, I have now entertained you as my ally and associate in this expedition, wherefore withdraw yourself immediately to the place I have allotted you, and have a particular care there of the peace of my people, and the country near you, for fear my enemies should take advantage of my absence, and press me with troubles at home.

You will do me the office of a kind ally, every jot as effectually in that government, as if you were my second in the army, and in the mean time, I am as much your friend as ever.

Upon this declaration of Achish, they parted, and David, according to his order, went his way to Ziklag.

But while David was following the camp of the Philistines, the Amalekites fell upon Ziklag, took it, and laid it in ashes; making dreadful havock in the country thereabouts: they pillaged all wherever they came, and at last went home again with what booty they could carry along with them.

David, at his return, finding the place of his habitation destroyed and desolate, his own wives, and the wives and children of his fellow soldiers hurried away prisoners, with all that belonged unto them, he broke out into so passionate an extravagance of lamentation and outrage, that he rent his clothes, and wept himself dry, even for want of matter to supply more tears. His followers were ready to stone him too, for the loss of their wives and children; for they said he was the cause of all, and the whole miscarriage was laid at his door.

When David had wearied himself with weeping, he came to the resolution of applying to heaven for comfort, and desired Abiathar the high-priest to put on his pontifical robes and consult God in form, and then report of the oracle. The question was, whether or not, in case of overtaking the Amalekites upon the pursuit, the Israelites might be allowed to receive their wives and children again, that had been taken from them before, and revenge themselves upon the enemy.

The High-priest bade David follow them, and prosper; Upon which encouragement he took his six hundred men, and pursued them to the brook Besor; where they found an Egyptian that had lost his way and was ready to perish with hunger, having been three days in the desert without eating. They took pity upon him, and after giving him a little refreshment, they asked him who he was? and to whom he belonged? He told them he was an Egyptian born, and a servant to a person who was at the sacking and burning of Ziklag, and the country thereabout; who left him

him upon the way in his passage home again, because he was so faint that he could not keep up with the troops.

David made use of this Egyptian for his guide, upon the trace of the Amalekites, whom at last he overtook, and found some feasting, and some with much pride and vanity, in the contemplation of their late booty. In short, while they were drowned in drink and sleep, and wholly set upon their ease and pleasure, and unarmed, David fell upon them in this disorder and confusion, mingling their blood with their wine, so that there escaped out of their whole number, not above four hundred persons, who were carried off by the swiftness of their camels, the pursuit continued from noon until night; and in the close of the action they recovered their wives, children, and booty.

David had but four hundred men with him, the other two hundred were left behind for a guard to the baggage.

Upon his return from the spoil, the four hundred that were upon the action, would not allow the two hundred, that were upon easier service, to have any part in the booty, excepting their wives and children.

David looked upon this as an unreasonable proposition, *For*, said he, *the victory was given by God, and being a bleſſing upon the common cauſe, it is but reaſonable that the whole body ſhould partake of the benefit, eſpecially where the one part was upon duty, as well as the other, and at the ſame time preſerved their baggage.*

This decision passed into a law: that is to say, The spoil to be equally divided between them that guarded the baggage and those that should fight the battle.

(*c*) David, after his return to *Ziklag*, sent up and down to his friends and acquaintance, in the tribe of Judah, presents out of the spoil.

We shall pass now from the destruction of *Ziklag*, and the total overthrow of the *Amalekites*, to a bloody victory obtained by the *Philiſtines* over the *Iſraelites*.

The armies being joined, the encounter was very sharp. Saul, and his sons, did all that was possible for brave men to do; but finding themselves oppressed with numbers (for the whole stress lay upon them) they had no more to do than to die honorably, that the enemy should have little reason to boast of their purchase.

In fine, they were so continually surrounded by fresh numbers, that they were forced to submit to the necessity of an insuperable fate.

Upon the fall of Saul's sons, viz. *Jonathan*, *Aminadab*, and *Malchiſhua*, that were slain in the heat of the battle, the whole army fell into confusion, and fled in a direct rout; while the Philistines pressing upon the rear made a prodigious slaughter.

Saul shifted for himself awhile with a small body of his own, but they

(*c*) *David*. This was a very popular and judicious step in David, as he hereby not only discharged himself of the oblations of gratitude, but endeavoured to secure their interest and favour, in case there should happen a vacancy in the throne.

were soon broken by the darts and arrows of the Philistines; and finding himself so weakened with wounds and loss of blood, that he was not able to do execution upon himself; therefore, in his extremty, he called to his armour-bearer to assist him in it, that he might not fall alive into the hands of his enemies. But the servant excused himself, out of the veneration he had for his majesty, and upon that refusal, Saul cast himself upon the point of his own sword; but not being able to finish what he had begun, he took notice of a young man, an Amalekite, near at hand, and desired him to take the sword, and dispatch him. He did it immediately, and made a prize of Saul's golden bracelets, and went off with them. When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he laid violent hands upon himself also; and there was not one of the king's-guard who out-lived his master. This battle was fought near the mountain of Gilboah.

No sooner had the Israelites of the valley beyond Jordan, and the cities of the plains, had intelligence of the death of Saul, and his sons, and of the entire destruction of his army, but they withdrew themselves out of their open towns into more secure and strong holds; while the Philistines took possession, and without any difficulty made themselves masters of the places the other had quitted.

On the next day after the battle the Philistines coming into the field to view the dead, found the bodies of Saul, and his sons, among the rest. They stripped them, cut off their heads, and sent expresses every way up and down with the news of this defeat.

Their arms they deposited in the temple of Ashtaroth, and their bodies they exposed upon gibbets, under the walls of the city of Bethshem, known at this day by the name of *Scythopelis*.

This barbarous outrage upon the bodies of Saul and his sons, coming to the ears of the men of Jabesh-Gilead, raised in them such an indignation at the inhumanity of refusing them the last rites of burial, that some of the most daring and enterprizing among them, made up a party and travelling all night, took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the walls of Bethshem, and carried them away to Jabesh; not a creature daring to open his mouth against them.

Their deaths were lamented by the whole people of the place, who gave their bodies a publick and an honourable interment in the chief part of their province. They spent seven days in so strict a solemnity of fasting and mourning, that men, women, and children, were all bound indispensibly to observe it.

This was the end of Saul, according to the prediction of Samuel, for his not prosecuting the war against the Amalekites. The deists, have excused Saul, and branded Samuel, with the epithet of cruelty; but the christian who believes in a Saviour, answers, that it was the command of God, and therefore ought to have been obeyed with cheerfulness, according to his order, and for the massacre of Ahimelech, and his family,

mily, with the devastation even of the sacerdotal city itself.

He ruled in the days of Samuel, eighteen years, and twenty two more after his decease, coming to this unhappy end in the same manner as it is here set forth.

CHAP. IV.

DAVID AVENGES THE DEATH OF SAUL ON THE AMALEKITE. HIS ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN. IS PROCLAIMED KING OF JUDAH. DAVID'S SUCCESS AGAINST THE KING OF THE OTHER TRIBES. ABNER, REVOLTS TO DAVID. IS SLAIN BY JOAB. DAVID REVENGES THE DEATH OF ABNER. THE TRIBES UNITE UNDER DAVID, WHO RULES WITH PRUDENCE AND PIETY, AND HIS CROWNED WITH A SERIES OF SUCCESS.

SOON after David's arrival at Ziklag, from the conquests of the Amalekites, he received the news of the death of Saul, from the very man who had slain him in battle.

When he approached David with every token of grief and humility, and was enquired concerning the cause of his arrival, as well as his person, he thus related the fatal case. *I am an Amalekite, and come from the late engagement of the Israelites, in which fell king Saul, and three of his sons, together with many thousands of his inferior ranks. I shall speak no more than what I saw; it was my fortune to be near the king, when he was in his extremity. He cast himself upon the point of his own sword; but being faint with his wounds, he could not execute what he had begun; so that upon his earnest desire, I was forced to do the office for him, to keep him from falling alive into the hands of his enemies.*

He shewed David at the same time the bracelet, and the crown that he took from the dead body (to confirm the truth of his story) which he reserved for a present to David.

Upon this melancholy news, he rent his clothes, and spent the whole day with his friends in tears and lamentations. But the most sensible part of his affliction was, the loss of Jonathan, his ever dear and faithful friend, and more than once, the very preserver of his life.

So transcendant was the virtue of David, and his generosity toward Saul, that notwithstanding so many repeated practices upon his life, he did not only deplore his misfortune, but ordered the criminal to be delivered up to (*d*) Justice; not only upon his own confession, but the more certain evidence of his guilt, in the crown and the bracelet, that he took from Saul, after he was dead; and proving himself to be truly an Amalekite, owning the very principal of a regicide.

David, upon the melancholy occasion,

(*d*) *Justice.* David herein acted the good part of a politician, if not of a righteous judge; for being shortly to ascend the throne himself, it was necessary to establish this maxim, that to slay the Lord's anointed, upon any account whatever, was a most execrable crime, and to clear himself from the imputation of being any way concerned in, or accessary to so foul a fact (which his enemies might have been apt to imagine, had he given any countenance or protection to this man); he ordered him immediately to be put to death.

casion, composed several elegies, one of which cited by the sacred historian, is justly deemed an eminent specimen of piety and rhetoric.

When David had paid his last duties to the memory of Saul, and his sons, and the term of the mourning was expired, he consulted God by the prophet, which of the cities of Judah should be allotted him for his habitation: and it was answered Hebron. Wherefore he left Ziklag immediately, and repaired thither, with his two wives, and the guards of his person that he had about him; whither the whole tribe came soon after, and a full convention with one voice proclaimed him king.

David had heard by this time of the generous and respectful behaviour of the men of Jabesh toward Saul and his sons, and how bravely they rescued their bodies from infamy, in the face of the enemy, and gave them an honourable burial. So that he sent them particular acknowledgments, in his own name, for what they had done in honour of those princes, as an oblation that should for ever be remembered to their advantage. The same messenger giving them to understand, that the tribe of Judah had declared David their king.

In this juncture, Abner, the son of Ner, and Saul's general, a man of great courage and resolution, having heard of the death of Saul, Jonathan, and two other of his sons, in the late battle, posted to the camp, to look after Ishbosheth, at that time the only survivor of Saul's male issue.

When he found him, to secure him from danger, crossed the river Jordan with him, and got him declared king of all Israel, the tribe of Judah excepted, appointing *Manahahiem* for his residence, as much as the camp.

Abner was so incensed against the tribe of Judah, for the choice of the king that he resolved to make war upon them for it, and detached a body of chosen men for the encounter.

Joab, the son of Zeruiah, had the command of David's army, taking his two brothers, Abishai and Ahazel along with him. When they were advanced into a certain fountain of Gibeon, the two armies being in sight of each other, drew up; but as they stood in order, and ready to engage, Abner proposed a trial before-hand between an equal number of each side, to see which were the braver men of the two. So that by consent, they sent out twelve and twelve to dispute the point, and in sight of the two armies.

They began the combat with their darts, and then fell in with their swords, every man taking his adversary by the hair, and stabbing one another, till they all fell down upon the spot. The armies joined them, and for some time fought furiously on both sides; but in the end Abner was totally routed. Joab, and his two brothers, closely pursuing them, encouraged their men, both to the chace and execution. But no man stuck so close to him, as Ahazel, who was swifter of foot than most horses, and having singled him out, pressed close after him, without turning either to the right hand, or to the left.

When

When Abner found himself so resolutely pursued, he offered him a suit of arms to desist; but seeing he could not prevail, he fairly advised him not to put him to the necessity of doing him a mischief, for the saving of his own life; after which he could never think of looking his brother in the face

Abner perceiving by this time, that Ahazel was not to be wrought upon, turned his lance in his flight, and struck his pursuer dead upon the spot. This accident retarded the pursuit; for the people gave over the chace, to stand gazing at the slain Ahazel. But Joab and his brother Abishai were now past the dead body, and so exasperated against Abner for the death of their brother, that with incredible speed and vigour they followed the pursuit till towards sunset.

Upon the hill of Ammah, Abner, with the tribe of Benjamin, took the advantage of a rising ground to observe the enemy, and from thence to reason the case with Joab, representing to him, *That this outragious animosity was already gone too far among the people of the same blood and profession; and that he had entreated Ahazel to desist from the pursuit; but he being obstinately resolute still continued, and thereby forced him for self-preservation, to slay him at his feet.*

Joab could not oppose the reasonableness of Abner's plea, and therefore caused a retreat to be sounded and encamped upon the same place, that night. But Abner continued his march over the river Jordan, to the palace of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul. The day following he took a view of the dead (which he caused to be buried) computing that Abner lost three hundred and sixty men, and David nineteen; without reckoning Ahazel, whose body was carried by Joab and Abishai, to Bethlehem, and there laid in the sepulchre of their father; from whence they returned to king David at Hebron.

This dispute between the adherents of David, and those of Saul, was the cause of a seditious and bloody war among the Israelites. But David's army waxed gradually stronger than that of Saul, and gained many advantages over their opponents.

David in the mean time had six sons, by as many wives, Ammon, the son of Ahinonam; Daniel the son of Abagail; Absalom, the son of Meacah; Adonijah, the son of Haggith Shephotiah, the son of Abithal; and Ithrea, the son of Egla.

In the prosecution of this civil war, it was the prudence, the interest and the popularity of Abner, that supported the pretensions of Saul's family, and kept the people in their obedience to Ishbosheth. But this prince being informed that Abner lived in a scandalous familiarity with Rizpah, one of his father's late concubines, reprimanded him so severely for it, that it highly incensed him, as he had ever been a zealous adherent to the cause and interest of king Saul, and his family.

Upon this provocation Abner meditated revenge, determining to transfer the crown from Ishbosheth to

David, and thereby make it generally known, that Ishbosheth was not advanced to the government for any virtue or ability of his own, but wholly by the advice, arms, interest, recommendation, and tryed fidelity of himself.

He sent a commission to Hebron, with full power to make a league with David in his name, upon this condition, that from and after the time of Abner's drawing off all the tribe from Ishbosheth to David and advancing him to the throne by the universal consent of the people, Abner should be received as David's first minister and favourite.

Nothing could have been more welcome to David than this proposal, and it was accordingly accepted. The first thing he desired, as the earnest of a future alliance, was the restoring Michal, whom he had purchased with very great labour and hazard, in obtaining the heads of six hundred Philistines, a bargain for her of Saul.

Abner therefore took Michal out of the arms of Phalti, upon whom she was bestowed, and then called the principals of the people, both military and civil, together, and addressed them to this purpose:

There was a time, when you would have gone over from Ishbosheth to David, and I was against it; but you are now at liberty to do what you please; for the Prophet Samuel hath most infallibly assured us, from the voice of God himself, that David is the man, whom Divine Providence hath designed as king and governor of the whole nation of the Israelites; and that it is he, and only he, that is to avenge us upon the Philistines, and to bring them under our yoke.

These words were so clear a discovery of Abner's design, that the hands of the people, and of the army, fell in unanimously with his opinion; and from that time forward declared and acted openly in favour of David. When they had proceeded thus far, Abner called for the Benjamites, on whom alone the protection of Ishbosheth depended, and delivered himself to them in the same manner, and with the same effect as he had done the other tribes, for they all declared themselves as one man for David.

When Abner had thus advanced toward the performance of his conditions, he took about twenty chosen men with him to David, in order, partly to ratify the treaty, and partly for common satisfaction, as people rather preferred, being present at treaties in which they are concerned, than having them transacted by proxy, that the proceedings on both sides might be the more impartially transmitted from the one to the other, and an exact report made of what passed between himself and the heads of the tribes, and how he had now brought over the Benjamites to David's party.

Abner and his company were treated by David with freedom and magnificence, for the time they staid; but after some few days, he desired, for the present, to be dismissed, that he might conduct the army and the people to him; and upon delivering up the government into his hands,

by

by the consent of the whole nation, fulfil his design.

Abner was presently dispatched according to his desire, and hardly got out of one of the gates of Hebron, before Joab, David's general, who had been somewhere abroad, came in at an other; being given to understand that Abner had been in private with David, upon certain proposals to settle him in the government, the conditions offered and accepted, and that a league had been solemnly ratified betwixt them; strong prepossession entered into Joab's head, that this intrigue of Abner's would be his ruin, and supplant him not only in his master's favour, but in the most honourable of his commissions; especially, considering that Abner was a man of policy and address, and one who well knew how to improve a critical juncture to his own advantage.

To vent his spleen against Abner, Joab endeavoured to persuade the king, by artful insinuations, that he should do well to beware how he trusted Abner; for his main intent was to establish the family of Saul in the government.

When Joab found that he could not work upon David, by calumny and slander, to the prejudice of Abner, he bethought himself of a surer and shorter way therefore to sate his revenge, which was by taking away his life: he dispatched messengers after him in David's name, to call him back again with all imaginable expedition, under a pretext of somewhat forgotten in his instructions that was very considerable.

The messengers overtook him upon the way at a place called Sirah, about three miles from Hebron; and upon their delivering their message, Abner very innocently went back with them to the city, little thinking of the malicious intention of taking away his life. Upon his coming up to the walls of the town, Joab stood in the gate with a specious appearance of kindness and humanity, ready to receive him; and taking him aside, as upon private business, surprized him, and plunged his sword into his bowels.

Thus was this brave man taken off by the perfidious malice and treachery of Joab, in revenge (as he pretended) for the death of his brother Ahazel, who was slain in the battle of Hebron, upon the violent pursuit of Abner; but in truth, to gratify his jealousy and revenge, for fear of being supplanted in his court preferments *.

* This instance is sufficient to convince us, that men abandoned to the lust of avarice and ambition, will stick at nothing; for they are never at ease so long as they are in the pursuit of what they eagerly desire, they press their ends, without ever examining or considering the means. There is no such thing as a scruple of honour or conscience in the case; but right or wrong, how to accomplish their ends; and they are still bolder yet in the defence and maintenance of a thing ill gotten, than they were in the acquiring of it; for they can better bear a miscarriage in missing what they would have been at, than the shame of having any thing forced away from them that they have acquired. They will, in short, struggle harder to keep what they have, especially when they have tasted the sweet of it, than to get what they had not. But here is enough in a word upon this point.

David

David was so excessively affected with the news of Abner's death, that stretching forth his right hand toward Heaven, in an appeal and protestation, that he was neither privy nor consenting to the fact; cursed most bitterly the assassin, whoever he was, his family, and all his accomplices: and this he did not only in detestation of so base a practice, but as a proof that he had acted on the strictest niceties of faith and honour to Abner.

He appointed by proclamation a public mourning for him, with all the solemnities of tearing garments, and putting on sackcloth, he himself with his great ministers and officers assisting at the funeral, and giving sufficient demonstration, by wringing of hands, beating their breasts, and other expressions of sorrow, both of the veneration they had for Abner's memory, and their sense of so inestimable a loss, and this conduct fully convinced the people, that David was far from approving or consenting to so execrable an act.

He caused the body to be interred at Hebron, with great state and magnificence, and composed an epitaph himself, to the honour of the deceased. He was the chief mourner, and a president to all the rest, who acted in conformity to his example. The death of Abner, in short, afflicted him to such a degree, that his friends could not prevail upon him to touch either meat or drink that whole day. This religious strictness gained exceedingly upon the affections of the people, and particularly upon the friends of Abner to whom nothing could be more acceptable than this last testimony of David's veneration and esteem for his person and memory, being eye witnesses that he did not treat him, in a slight and ignominious way, as an enemy, but with all the tokens of generosity, justice, and friendship. Beside it heightened the character of David's piety and benevolence, in giving men to understand what they might expect from him themselves, if Abner's case should ever be theirs. David likewise, in this proceeding, consulted his interest as well as his reputation and virtue; for afterwards, he was never suspected of the least want of good-will towards Abner.

When the assembly were upon the point of breaking up, David addressed them in a manner which did honour to the memory of the deceased general, representing to them first his own particular unhappiness, in being deprived of so valuable a friend: and then how much the whole nation suffered in the loss of so brave and so wise a man; and, in short, a person so necessary both for war and counsel.

He then assured them that God, who judged rightly would not let this murder pass unrevenged; adding this solemn declaration, he is my witness, that I am not in condition to call Joab and Abishai to an account; for they have a greater interest in the army perhaps than I myself: but this I dare pronounce, that sooner or later, divine justice will find them out.

The extraordinary fate of the unfortunate Abner, greatly affected Ishbosheth,

Ishbosheth, who had thereby sustained the loss of a most intimate friend, able counsellor, expert general, in short, one who had been principally accessary to his advancement to the throne, and continuance on it. He did not indeed long survive him, for he was treacherously murdered soon afterwards by *Baanah* and *Rechab;* (*a*) the sons of *Rimmon.*

These two brothers were Benjamites, of the first rank; who thinking that if Ishbosheth were but taken out of the way, David would be clear of all competitors, concerted the matter betwixt them, how they might effect this purpose; making no manner of doubt, but honours and commands in abundance would be conferred upon them as rewards for the performance of so good an office.

At a time, therefore, when he was alone in his bed-chamber, taking his afternoon's repose, no guards at hand, and the very servant that commonly kept the door, wearied and fast asleep, they took their opportunity to steal into the chamber, (and having killed him in his sleep) where they found him, cut off his head, and posted away with it all night toward Hebron, in order to avoid the public resentment of the people, and to bring the present so much the fresher to him whom they pretended to oblige.

When they came to their journey's end, they presented it to David, not a little valuing themselves upon the merit of having destroyed his competitor for the empire, but that they were disappointed in their towering hopes and expectations, the following noble and spirited declaration of David, will sufficiently shew.

Wicked wretches that you are! prepare yourselves immediately to receive the just reward of your horrid villainy. Do not you know that I requited the murderer of Saul according to his demerit; who, when he had taken away that sacred life, had the confidence to bring me his golden crown for an ostentation of the service he had done me in it? Nay, though it was at the instance too of Saul himself, that he did it, to prevent the indignity of being taken alive by his enemies. Am not I the same man, do you think, at this day, that I was then? or am I turned so abandoned a wretch since, as to countenance the most profligate of men and of actions, and to reckon myself under an obligation to you for dipping your hands (upon my account, as you would have it thought,) in the blood of your Lord? The cutting of his throat in his bed too; and the throat, of a person so just, and so generous a

(*a*) *Rechah* and *Baanah.* These regicides are called, the children of Benjamin, and captains of bands; and therefore, as they were not only of Saul's tribe, but officers in his son's army, they had the greater obligation to be honest and faithful to the family of Saul; for there is great reason to imagine, that Saul, who lived in the borders of Benjamin, conferred more favours on that tribe, than on any of the rest, and might therefore expect a greater fidelity and esteem from them than the others.

The distinguishing these men therefore by their tribe, as well as by their names, was highly proper and necessary, to shew what vile ungrateful villians they were, and how justly they deserved the severe and exemplary punishment which David inflicted upon them.

patron and benefector to you, that all the advantages you can pretend to in this world, are but what you ſtand indebted for to his bounty and goodneſs; wherefore you ſhall pay for your breach of faith to your maſter, and for the ſcandal you would have caſt upon me, for what greater wound could any man give me in my reputation, than to expoſe me for a perſon that could take pleaſure in the tidings, or give countenance to the committing of ſo barbarous and inhuman a murder?

Having thus remonstrated and reprimanded them for the commission of so horrid a crime, in order to impress the minds of others with a due sense of the same, and prevent it for the future, David commanded some of his guards, to slay the guilty persons, and afterwards he caused the head of Ishbosheth to be laid in the monument of Abner, with due form and solemnity.

When David's orders were executed, all the elders and chief officers of state, approached him, in order to recognize his regal authority, and lay their lives and fortunes at his feet, assuring him of the zeal and devotion they ever had for him, even in the life of Saul, and when they had the honour to serve under his command; and farther observing how the prophet Samuel, according to God's order and appointment, had declared him king, and that the government would descend to his sons after him; foretelling that the great work of subduing the Philistines was reserved for him alone, and consequently the settling of Israel in the possession of a lasting peace and safety.

David highly commended them for their good-will and disposition, encouraging them to go on as they had begun, with an assurance, that he for his part, would never give them cause to repent it. David accompanied this declaration with a splendid treat; and when he had entertained them with all humanity and freedom, he sent them away with a summons to the whole body of the people to meet at his palace.

Pursuant to this general summons, there assembled of the tribe of Judah, six thousand and eight hundred men armed, with shield and lance. These had been hitherto of the party of Saul, over and above those of the same tribe, who had made David king by themselves.

Of the tribe of Simeon, seven thousand, and one hundred, and upwards.

Of the tribe of Levi, four thousand seven hundred, with their leader Jehoida, and with these was the High-Priest Zadock, with two and twenty eminent men of his relations.

Of the tribe of Benjamin, three thousand armed men; though this tribe was altogether of opinion, that some of Saul's family would succeed to the government.

Of the tribe of Ephraim, twenty thousand and eight hundred, strong men, and of great courage.

Of the tribe of Manasses, eighteen thousand.

Of the tribe of Issachar, two hundred cunning men, who could foretell things to come, beside twenty thousand in arms.

Of

Of the tribe of Zebulun, fifty thousand choice men, and well armed; this tribe came over to David in general. All these used the same armour as the tribe of Gad.

Of Naphthali, a thousand eminent commanders, armed with shield and spear, with almost an innumerable multitude of their followers.

Of the tribe of Dan, twenty-eight thousand choice men.

Of the tribe of Asher, forty thousand; and of the two tribes beyond Jordan, and the other half of the tribe of Manasses, that were armed with shield, spear, sword and helmit, an hundred and twenty thousand.

This is the muster-roll of those who came up to David at Hebron, and brought corn, wine, and other necessary provisions with them in abundance, and with one voice proclaimed him their king.

When they had spent three days there in feasting, David marched out at the head of this army to Jerusalem.

The Jebusites, a people of the race of the Canaanites, were at that time, in possession of the city; and upon David's advance toward them, they shut their gates, and in a way of defiance to David and his troops, brought out their (*b*) lame and their blind to the walls for the defence of the town.

David was so incensed at this contemptuous mockery, that he resolved immediately to attack the city; reasonably judging, that if he made an example of the people of this place, it would strike a terror into all others for the future. Accordingly he advanced with the flower of his army, and, upon a general assault, entered the lower town; but the castle still made an obstinate resistance; David finding it to be a strong place, the attempt hazardous, and his honour at stake upon the carrying of it, bethought himself of a means to inflame the courage of his men by some extraordinary proposal of honour and reward; and by that incentive to kindle an emulation among them.

To effect this, he passed his royal word, that he who first mounted the wall, and made good his station, should have the command of the army. Stimulated by the mighty promise the Israelites joined in a fierce attack, and a generous contention arose, who should merit that honour. At length Joab mounted the wall, and carried the prize; so that he called upon the king from the top of the battlement, to fulfil his promise.

Having expelled the enemy from the castle, and repaired the town, the king gave to Jerusalem the name of the city of David, and made it his place of residence during his reign.

This memorable transaction hap-

(*b*) *Lame and the Blind.* Some have ignorantly asserted, that the Gods of the Jebusites were lame and blind, and therefore they set them upon the walls, as a security against David; but as this interpretation seems rather too metaphorical, I have chose the construction which Josephus puts upon this passage, Lib. vii. c. 2. viz. that they imagined their fortress so impregnable, that by way of contempt, they told David, that their very blind and lame would be able to defend it against him and all his forces: and this is a sense so extremely plain and obvious that the renowned *Bochart*, wonders how any man of learning, can require, or seek for any other.

pened

pened after he had ruled seven years and six months over the tribe of Judah in Hebron.

Upon the establishment of his court at Jerusalem, success attended his affairs every day more and more; for God in his Providence designing it for a seat of glory, had a peculiar kindness for the place.

(c) Hiram king of Tyre, awed by the great success of David, sent an embassy, upon a treaty of friendship and alliance, with presents likewise of cedar-wood, builders, and master-workmen toward the erecting of a palace for him at Jerusalem.

David fortified the upper town, and laid that and the citadel both in one, with a wall about them, and gave the command of it to Joab. He was the first who changed the name of it, and it was after the casting out of the Jebusites; for in the days of Abraham, it was called Solyma; and some will have it that Homer pointed at this city, when he speaks of the people of Solyma; for the word Hieron, or temple, in the Hebrew signifies, security, or a fortress.

Now the whole time of the war with the Philistines, from the Israelites dividing their lands, under the command of Joshua, to the day here spoken of, was reckoned to be five hundred and fifteen years; but five Barbarians kept the possession of Jerusalem all along, till they were driven out by David.

Now there was among the Jebusites a very rich man, an orphan, who had done many good offices for the Israelites, and deserved singularly well from David himself. This man therefore upon the sacking of the town, was preserved by the king from the heat and fury of the soldiers, after his settlement at Jerusalem.

David took several wives, besides concubines, more than he had done before; by whom he had eleven children, *Shammuah, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Eliſhua, Nepheg, Daphia, Eliſhama, Eliada, Eliphalet*, and a daughter named *Thamar*, who was the sister of Absalom. Nine of the sons were lawfully begotten, but the two last by concubines.

The Philistines, ever avowed enemies to the Israelites, no sooner heard that David was acknowledged as king by the tribes in general, than they mustered their forces, and encamped in a place called the valley of the giants, not far from Jerusalem.

Upon this occasion, David, who would do nothing without counsel and direction from above, appointed the High-Priest to inform himself in the way that God had prescribed, what might be the event of this battle.

Having received an encouraging

(c) *Hiram King of Tyre.* The primitive name of this prince was Abibalaus, but before he entered into a league of amity with David, he changed it into Hiram, that so it might be the standing name of him and his successors, as Pharoah, and afterwards Ptolemy in Egypt, Abimelech among the Philistines, and Cæsar among the Romans: and his sending to David only under this name, seems to be the true reason why no other name is mentioned in scripture.

answer,

answer, he immediately advanced against the foe, and fell upon them in surprize, and charged them with such vehemence, that a total defeat soon ensued, with great slaughter on the side of the Philistines.

This was a signal victory obtained without much opposition, but it must not therefore be inferred, that the army of the Philistines was inconsiderable in point of numbers, or the valour of their men, Syria and Phœnicia, and several other warlike nations, were all engaged in the confederacy. It had been otherwise, if after so many defeats, and the loss of so many thousands, they could never have brought an army into the field again; and we find, that immediately after this death, they invaded the Israelites with thrice the number they had before, and had the confidence to post themselves in the very same place again.

The king, after his constant custom, consulted the oracle as formerly, and received orders to lie still with his army in a certain wood, called the grove of mourning, or the (*d*) mulberry trees, not far from the enemy; and not to move from thence, or make any attempt upon any occasion whatsoever, till he found the branches of the trees in an agitation, as of their own accord, and without a breath of air stirring to cause that motion.

David punctually obeyed the divine command; and as soon as the providential sign was given him, he advanced, as to a certain and predetermined victory. The Philistines gave way on the very first attack, but when they came to close fight, they ran with the Israelites at their backs, and their swords in their reins.

They were pursued with great slaughter to Gazar, a town situated upon the borders of either party. They then pillaged the camp, where they made themselves masters of a prodigious booty, with little trouble or hazard, seizing their idols among other things, and breaking them to pieces.

This war being speedily and happily finished, the king was pleased, by the advice and assent of his great council, to draw together the whole force he could (*e*) raise out of all the tribes under his jurisdiction, together with the priests and Levites; and to march with this great body directly to Kirjath-Jearim, and bring the ark of God from thence to Jerusalem, that being the place designed for holy worship, and for the celebration of all sacrifices, ceremonies and religious rites for the time to come.

(*d*) *Mulberry Trees.* God indeed is left to his own pleasure, what signs he shall think fit to give his people, upon any occasion for their good; but the more arbitary and uncommon any sign is, the more it seems to have proceeded from God. Though, therefore, the sound of people's going upon the tops of trees, be a thing not so congruous to our conception, yet it does not from hence follow, that it was not the real sign which God gave David, because the stranger the Phenomenon was the greater assurance it conveyed of the divine interposition in his favour.

(*e*) *Raise.* The reason why David summoned so many of his principal ministers and officers to attend him in bringing back the ark, is by some supposed to have been, that the minds of the young people, who perhaps had heard little or nothing of the ark, on account of its absence, might be impressed with a suitable veneration for it, in viewing the splendid triumph, which was made upon its return.

The tribes being met according to appointment, and all things in readiness for the removal of the ark, (David himself also assisting at the solemnity) the priests took it out of the house of Aminadab, and laying it upon a new waggon, with oxen to draw it, left the ark in charge with their children and relations. The king himself went foremost; and was followed by a multitude of people, glorifying God in sacred hymns and psalms.

And thus was the ark conducted towards Jerusalem, after the fashion of the country; dancing as they went to the sound of harps, cymbals, and other musical instruments.

As they were upon the way, at a certain place called the threshing-floor of Chidon, or Nachon, the oxen staggering with the ark, (*f*) Uzzah put forth his hand to keep it from overturning, and was immediately struck dead by divine vengeance, for persuming to touch it, as he was not in holy orders.

This exemplary death of Uzzah was a great affliction to David himself, and to all the people; and they called the place *Perez-Uzzah*, or the breach of Uzzah, which name it bore many hundred years David was so affected with the awful judgment inflicted on Uzzah, that lest it might peradventure be his case, if he should receive the ark into the city, (his fault being only the temerity of touching it) he suspended the carrying of it to Jerusalem, and turned off with it upon the way, into the house of a certain good man and a Levite, whose name was *Obed-edom*, and there it lay deposited for three whole months, in which time it was observed, that every thing prospered in the family, and that the master of it grew rich to admiration.

It was generally observed, how amazingly *Obed-edom* was improved in his fortune since he had the ark under his roof, and that of a very poor man, he became on a sudden considerable for wealth, and in so good a condition, that he was the wonder as well as the envy of his neighbours.

The rumour of Obed-edom's success reaching the king's ear, greatly encouraged him, insomuch that fear-

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(*f*) *Uzzah.* It is needless, nay often impious in frail mortals to enquire why God punishes his creatures in a manner so singular as that inflicted on Uzzah, but when God has given a positive order, no man is to call it in question. The ark, as the Rabbis say, was by his direction placed in a cart, though it ought to have been carried by staves upon the shoulders of the Levites; he, without any proper designation adventures to attend it, for there is no proof in scripture that he was a Levite; and when he thought it in danger of falling, officiously put forth his hand and laid hold of it, which was forbidden on pain of death. And when we consider further, that the ark had continued so long in obscurity, that the people had in a manner lost all sense of a divine power residing in it, we have less reason to wonder, that God, being disposed to retrieve the ancient honour of that sacred vessel, and to curb the heinous prophanations of it for the future, should single out one, the most culpable of many; one, who in three instances was then violating his commands, to be a monument of his displeasure against a wilful ignorance, or a rude contempt of his precepts; that by such an example, he might inspire both priests and people with a sacred dread of his majesty, and a profound veneration for his mysteries. Happy were it for us, however, if we could account for the operations of God with the same facility, that we can for the actions of his Saints; but his *counsels are a great deep*, and his *judgments*, though always just, are *past finding out*.

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less of danger, he resumed his former purpose of transporting it to Jerusalem, which was done after this manner.

The priests had the charge of carrying it, and seven choirs of singing men, according to the king's appointment, marching before it, David himself bearing his part in the concert, with dancing and singing to his harp; this his wife Michal (the daughter of the late king Saul) utterly disliked, as an action of too much levity, and below the dignity of David's character.

The ark being brought to the city, it was disposed of in the tabernacle, which David had made on purpose for it. Upon the occasion of this festival, there were sacrifices and peace offerings in abundance, and sufficient for the whole multitude; for there was not a man, woman, or child there, who had not a cake and a part of the flesh of the sacrifice given them; and when they had eaten plentifully, David returned to his palace.

He was met on the way by his wife Michal, who uttered many sincere wishes for his success; but still reproved him for dancing, as unlike a king, and also for uncovering himself in the eyes of his hand-maids and servants.

David told her that he was not ashamed of doing any thing that he knew was acceptable to that God who advanced him to the throne of Israel, in preference to her father, and all other pretenders; and that he would sing and dance again and again, without regarding at all, how either she or her hand-maids took it. Michal had no children by David; but by her other husband to whom Saul had given her in marriage, upon taking her away from David, she had five sons.

David encouraged by the frequent success, with which God crowned all his undertakings, was so sensible of God's goodness towards him upon the daily success of whatever he took in hand, that he began to make it matter of conscience to live in a palace of cedar himself, that was as stately as art and ornament could make it; and at the same time to lodge the ark in the tabernacle; so that he resolved to erect and dedicate a temple to God's honour and worship; and according to the prediction of Moses, he communicated the design to the Prophet Nathan; who upon counsel and advice, encouraged him to proceed upon the work; for he might be sure of God's special favour and Providence along with him. These words served more and more to animate and confirm David in his purpose and design.

In the night following, the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, *Go and tell David, that I accept of his good-will in being the first proposer of erecting a temple unto my service; yet, as the necessity of his wars, hath made him a man of blood, I cannot permit the doing of this work in his days; but let him know, that after a long and a happy life, he shall commit the care of the undertaking to his son and successor Solomon; whom I shall be as tender of as a father can be of his own child, and continue the*

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government in the line of his family for ever *; *or in case of his committing iniquity, I will only punish the transgression with bodily sickness or famine; not with a total rejection, as I did Saul.*

The Prophet, without any delay, acquitted himself of his commission; and it was so welcome a message to David, to be assured that the succession was secured to his posterity, and the honour of his family so graciously provided for, that he betook himself immediately to the ark of God, fell down upon his face, and offered this prayer and thanksgiving.

Lord, thy holy name be praised for all the benefits and mercies! thou that hast taken thy servant from the sheep-fold, and advanced him to this height of dignity and power.

Lord I bless thee for all this; for thy continued Providences to myself, and thy promises to my posterity; and for thy multiplyed deliverances and protections to thine own people.

David's late series of success, induced him again to meditate hostilities against the Philistines, to which he was not a little encouraged by a prediction that he should overcome all his enemies, and leave his kingdom in peace to his successor.

In order to prosecute this war, he appointed a day and place for a rendezvous, summoned his troops together, and when he was in a condition to march, made an incursion into the enemies country, overcame them in a pitched battle, took possession of a good part of their lands, and annexed them to the jurisdiction of the Israelites. He made war with the Moabites, destroyed two thirds of their army, took the rest, and made them tributaries.

After which he overthrew *Hadadezer*, the son of *Rohab*, king of *Zobah*, whom he encountered not far from the *Euphrates*, and killed him twenty thousand foot, and five thousand horse: taking also a thousand chariots, of which he reserved only an hundred for his own use, and burnt the rest.

CHAP. V.

DAVID'S SUCCESS AGAINST THE SYRIANS, HE SHEWS PECULIAR TOKENS OF FAVOUR TOWARDS MEPHIBOSHETH, THE SON OF JONATHAN, FOR HIS FATHER'S SAKE, WAGES WAR WITH THE AMMONITES. JOAB'S VICTORY OVER THEM. THE KING OF SYRIA'S TOTAL DEFEAT. CASE OF DAVID AND BETHSHEBA. TAMAR RAVISHED BY AMMON. ABSALOM HER BROTHER TAKES AWAY HIS LIFE, IN REVENGE FOR THE INJURY DONE TO HIS FAMILY.

THE king of *Syria* and *Damascus*, no sooner heard that *David* had proclaimed war against his friend and ally, the king of *Zobah*, than he dispatched a very considerable body of forces, in order to suc-

* *For ever.* Though these words in their primary signification, plainly relate to the continuance of David's family upon the throne of Israel; yet in a more extensive sense, they are no obscure prophecy of the kingdom of the Messiah; as the expression for ever, can only be applied to him who is the eternal Son of God, and of whose dominion there shall be no end.

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cour him, and remove, if possible, the seat of the war.

After several skirmishes, he came to a battle with David near Euphrates, where he lost the greater part of his army, twenty thousand being cut off, the rest saved themselves by flight.

Nicolaus mentions this same *Adad*, in the fourth book of his history as follows. *A long time after, one Adad, a valiant man, and a native of the place, had the command of Damascus and Syria, Phœnicia only excepted.*

There happened to be a war betwixt the same Adad and David, the king of the Jews; and several battles fought between them; but in the end, Adad was overcome at the Euphrates, behaving himself with the resolution of a brave prince, and a great captain. And the same author, treating further of his posterity, says, *That the government was handed down from father to son, to the tenth generation; the successor still receiving the Father's name with the empire, as the Ptolemies among the Egyptians.*

The third, in order from this Adad, and the greatest man of the family, out of a generous zeal to repair the honour that his Grandfather lost by this defeat, poured in an army upon the Jews, and laid waste Samaria.

The historian was not mistaken in this part of his relation; for this is the Adad who invaded Samaria in the reign of Ahab king of Israel.

With this victorious army David over-ran Damascus and the rest of Syria; left garrisons behind him where he saw convenient; laid the country under contribution, and so returned home again; carrying with him to Jerusalem the golden quivers, and other rich equipage that were taken from Adad's guards; and dedicating the spoil and trophies to God, in acknowledgment of the victory he had obtained through his favour and protection.

All these valuable spoils, and much more, were afterwards taken by *Sysack*, the king of Egypt, upon the sacking of Jerusalem, in his war with *Rehoboam*, David's grandson.

During David's extraordinary success through the blessing of the Almighty God upon his arms, he invaded *Betah* and *Berothai*, the two most considerable cities in the whole dominions of *Hadadezer*; both which he took by assault, with gold and silver, to an inestimable value; beside a great quantity of a sort of brass, esteemed of a greater value than even gold itself.

This was the metal that *Solomon* afterwards made use of for his beautiful basons, and a huge vessel, called the sea, upon the finishing and adorning the temple.

Toi, king of *Hamath*, alarmed and terrified at David's victory over the king of Syria; and thinking it most prudent to secure the interest and favour of so powerful and successful a prince, dispatched his son *Joram* to him, with a compliment of congratulation for the victory gained over their common enemy (for so was Hadadezer reputed) with instructions to solicit a league of amity and fair understanding betwixt them; not

forgetting several magnificent presents in vessels of gold, silver, and brass antique and curious, to the highest degree of excellency and perfection. David accepted both of the proposals and the presents, receiving and dismissing the ambassador, to the honour and satisfaction of both parties; but still dedicated to God, all the spoils of gold and silver, and precious things, that were taken from the enemy, as to the cause of the victory. Nor was David successful only in his own personal adventures and undertakings, but God prospered him in all his commissions also, executed by deputies and lieutenants: as in the case of *Abiſhai*, *Joab's* brother, who was sent out with an army against the *Idumeans*; and by God's assistance not only subdued them, but after eighteen thousand of them were killed upon the spot, kept them in awe with garrisons, as a check upon them; charged the land with a contribution, and taxed the people by the head.

David, during the course of his regal administration attended most punctually to the strictest laws of equity, piously resolved to establish his throne in truth and righteousness. He made *Joab*, the son of *Zeruiah*, his general, and *Jehoſaphat*, the son of *Ahilud*, the keeper of his records.

He chose out of the house of *Phineas*, *Abiathar* and *Zadock*, who were his friends, to be his Priests, and *Seraiah* of secretary. *Benai* the son of *Jehoiada* commanded his body-guards, and the king's elder sons were still incorporated into that body.

Having made the necessary regulations in his domestic concerns, and settled the officers of his state, David turned his attention upon his old and dear friend and associate Jonathan, and upon the solemn league of mutual amity that had passed betwixt them; for he had this virtue among many others, that he never forgot an obligation to a friend, but looked upon a return for past benefits as the most sacred of all debts.

Upon this consideration, he made diligent enquiry, what sons, friends, or relations, Jonathan had left behind him, that he might find matter for his gratitude to work upon. In pursuance of this enquiry, there was brought to him one Ziba, formerly a servant and a freeman of Saul's, as the most likely person to give him information.

The king asked him if he knew of any of Jonathan's family yet living, and where to find them; for he lay under an obligation to them, which he would gladly repay?

Ziba made answer, that he had a son yet alive, whose name was Mephibosheth; who by a mischance happened to be lame of one leg; for that upon the news of that bloody battle, wherein his grand-father, and his father, were slain, the nurse took him up in a fright to run away with him, and stumbling, let him fall out of her arms, and hurt him.

Upon farther examination the king had notice that he was brought up with one Machir, in the city of Lodebar, and there he was at present.

Mephibosheth being sent for; who when he approached the royal presence,

sence, prosterated himself at the king's feet, and did him reverence.

The king bade him be of good cheer, and hope for better days; assuring him of all the comfort he could wish for from the favour of his prince. Accordingly he appointed him immediately to be put in possession of his father's and grandfather's estate, gave Ziba charge to look after it, and take care of the grounds, and from time to time to receive the profits, and bring them to Jerusalem. Mephibosheth, after this he lived in the king's house, sat constantly at the same table with him, and David gave him Ziba, and fifteen sons that he had, with twenty others belonging to him, for his servants.

Ziba, having received his commission, did his duty, and went his way; promising to govern himself in all things according to his order and instructions. But the son of Jonathan continued still at Jerusalem with David, and was treated in all respects as a child of the family; so great a tenderness had David for any thing that had a relation to Jonathan. Thus it was with Mephibosheth, to whom was born a son whose name was Micha.

About this time died Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, a friend and ally of David's; and Hanun his son succeeded him. David upon this revolution, sent embassadors to him to condole his loss, comfort him in his affliction, and assure him of the same friendship and respect to himself that had been formerly paid to his father.

The chiefs of the Ammonites, esteeming the ingenuous conduct of David, as proceeding from a malicious and hostile design, endeavoured by all means to irritate their king, with calumnies against David; and, to put jealousies in his head, that his servants were not in truth embassadors but spies; who under pretext of a compliment of state, were sent to explore the strength and condition of the country; and that therefore, without giving any heed to fair words, he should do well to be cautious, and circumspect be-times, before things were gone beyond recovery. Hanun, over-ruled by this counsel, repugnant as it was both to truth and reason, sent the embassadors back again with all the indignities of scorn and vile usage imaginable. They cut off (*g*) one half of their beards, one half of their vests, and so dismissed them

(*g*) *One half of their Beards.* In a country where the hair was looked upon as so great an ornament, that many would rather die than part with it, the cutting it off was certainly one of the greatest indignities that human malice could invent; and the sheaving one half of their beards, which must make them look still more ridiculous; and cutting their garments even to the middle, and thereby exposing their nakedness, was an insult of so heinous and public a nature, that it would ill have become a man of David's martial spirit, and just sentiments of honour, to let it pass without punishment. How great a disgrace the loss of the hair was accounted in ancient times, is evident from the account of Damascenus, who says, that among the Indians, the king commanded the greatest offenders to be shaven, as the heaviest punishment that could be inflicted upon them: and Plutarch to like purpose tell us, that whenever a soldier among the Lacedemonians was convicted of cowardice, he was obliged to go with one part of his upper lip shaved, and the other not; nay even at this day, no greater indignity can be offered a Persian, than to cause his beard to be shaved; and Tavernier tells us, that when the Sophi caused an ambassador of Aurengzebe's to be used in this manner, telling him that he was not worthy to wear a beard, the emperor (in the manner as David here did) most highly resented the affron, that was given to him in the person of his ambassador. It is still the practice of the east, as appears from *Voltair's* life of *Charles* XII.

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in that dress, with the most reproachful behaviour not deigning them an answer. David was justly provoked at the indignity offered to his embassy, that he immediately declared his resolution publickly to right himself upon the Ammonites by an open war, and to call their king to an account for what he had done. The principals and allies of the Ammonites were so conscious to themselves, that their perfidy and breach of faith, together with the scandalous manner of it, was wholly unpardonable; that upon the first news of David's determination to vindicate himself by arms, they found themselves necessitated, in their own defence, to encounter force with force, and so prepared for a war.

They sent their embassadors to Syrus, the king of Mesopotamia, with a thousand silver talents to bring him into the alliance; which he accepted of, and engaged also the king of Zobah. These two kings had betwixt them about twenty thousand foot. They likewise purchased the assistance of the king of Maacah, and Ishbot, who had two and twenty-thousand men in arms.

Notwithstanding the mighty preparation of the Ammonites in conjunction with many potent allies, David's heart failed him not, he knew he had a gracious God to trust to; his cause was good, and the injury he had received intolerable; wherefore he was resolved to cast himself upon God's Providence, and the justice of his arms, for satisfaction; so that committing the management of the war to Joab, he sent him away with the choicest of his troops against the enemy.

He marched towards their capital city Rabatha, and encamped before it. The enemy marched forth out of the town, and divided into two bodies, the one consisting of auxiliaries, which they drew up in the open field; the other being composod only of Ammonites, ranged themselves before the gates that looked toward the Israelites.

Joab considering this disposition of the enemy's army, disposed of his troops likewise in the same order; and at the head of the best men he had, he himself prepared to charge Syrus, and the confederate kings, with one division, whilst he gave his brother Abishai the command of the other, with orders to attack the Ammonites; having agreed upon it beforehand that in case Syrus should get the better of Joab, Abishai should come into his relief; and Joab to send Abishai if he should be pressed by the Ammonites.

Joab hereupon dismissed his brother, encouraging him to behave himself valiantly, and to make good the reputation both of the cause and of the action. Joab made the onset upon Syrus, who stood very bravely at first; but numbers of his Men falling, the rest fled; and the Ammonites upon the very sight of their disorder, betook themselves likewise to flight, after the example of their fellows, without staying for the coming up of Abishai, and retreated as fast as they could into the town; so that Joab, after a dreadful havock of the enemy, returned to

Jerusalem

Jerusalem with his victorious army.

Though the Ammonites received so great a shock from the army of Israel, which had so frequently shewn the vast superiority over them, they still maintained their enmity, and determined upon being revenged. Accordingly they sent to Hadadezer, king of the Syrians, beyond Euphrates, and agreed with him for an auxiliary army upon certain terms. Shobach was his lientenant-general, over an army of eighty thousand foot, and ten thousand horse.

David receiving intelligence of the mighty strength of the Ammonites, judged it improper to make war any longer by his deputies, so that he himself passed the river Jordan with the whole army, and joined battle with the enemy, killed them forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, and came off a conqueror; Shobach, the general of Hadadezer, received a wound in this battle, of which proved mortal.

The people of Mesopotamia, upon this unfortunate overthrow, sent ambassadors with presents and addresses to David, and delivered themselves up; and the action being over, and the winter drawing on, he returned again safely to Jerusalem.

The king of Israel (by the blessing of God,) on the conquest and subjection of all his enemies, the beginning of the following spring, dispatched Joab his general, with a full commission to prosecute the war against the Ammonites.

This commission he executed with great success and punctuality; for he not only laid waste their country, but having driven them into *Rabbah*, their metropolis for safety, he laid close siege to the place, with a very powerful army.

David was undoubtedly a just and pious man, and a strict observer of the laws of his country; but yet, as the best of men are liable to temtations, and the influence of their passions, at this time he had the misfortune to fall into a grievous sin; the occasion of which was as follows:

As he was walking for his diversion one day, toward the cool of the evening, upon his terras, he happened to descry a woman bathing herself in her own house, who was a person of most exquisite shape and beauty, by name *Bathsheba*.

He fell in love with her immediately, and under the influence of a passionate appetite, had her brought to his bed.

Soon after this, she found herself with child, and desired the king to consider of some method for the concealment of it; as otherwise she must suffer death by the laws of the country.

Uriah, Bathsheba's husband and armour-bearer to Joab, was sent for by the king, who enquired of him concerning the state of the army, and the success of the siege. Having informed the king, that there was every reasonable prospect, he entertained him, and then dismissing him, bade him go home to his wife, but finding afterwards that he passed away that night in the palace, and among his guards, he asked him, *How it came*

to paſs that having been ſo long away from his wife, he had not rather choſen to go home; than ſpend his time elſewhere, ſo contrary to the practice of all other men under his circumſtances.

Sir, replied he, *I did not think it fair and honourable to indulge myſelf in the arms of my wife, at the ſame time when my general and fellow-ſoldiers lie in an enemy's country upon the ground.* The king then told him, *He ſhould now ſtay there one night more, and the next day he would ſend him back again to the army.*

When the king went to supper, he caused Uriah to sup with him, and made him drink so freely, that although he became thereby almost drunk, yet he never thought of going to his wife all this while, but spent that night again in the court, as he had done the former.

This highly incensed David; insomuch, that he wrote to Joab, that he was much dissatisfied with Uriah, and would have him punished according to his desert; and then proposed to him a method to bring it about, without giving any suspicion that it was done by his order; the contrivance was this. David appointed Joab to command him upon the first dangerous attack, where his companions might desert him and leave him to certain destruction from the enemy.

This letter he gave to Uriah, under his own hand and seal, to be delivered to Joab; who, upon the receipt, followed the king's direction, and put Uriah, upon a desperate attack, where he knew the enemies to be strongest, with several brave men to back him, for the countenance of the design; Joab promising to second him with the whole army, upon the least breach or possibility of entrance into the town. To enforce the iniquitous purpose, Joab reminded him of the great reputation he had already acquired by his military conduct, and urged the present opportunity of adding to his fame, and enhancing his esteem with his king and master.

Uriah, with great cheerfulness and assurance, undertook the post, while Joab gave his companions private orders to withdraw, and leave him as soon as they found themselves in any danger. The Israelites pressing hard upon the wall, put the Ammonites into a dreadful apprehension that they would force the town; whereupon they threw open their gates, and made a desperate salley. This served as a kind of signal to Uriah's companions, who according to Joab's order, basely adandoned their leader at the instant of iminent danger, and left that valiant man to fall a victim to confederate fraud and ingratitude.

He did all the execution that was possible to be done by a single man against numbers; and after several wounds received, fell like a man of honour, with his face to the enemy.

Some few of his friends, who also were ashamed to fly, not being made privy to the plot, fell with him at the same time.

David's design being thus executed, Joab sent him an express, giving an account

account that to make short work of a siege, that was otherwise likely to be tedious, he had given an assault to the town, lost men in the attempt, and was at last beaten off, and forced back again to the camp. Now, said Joab to the messenger, *if you find the king displeased at the news you carry him, tell him withal, that Uriah fell in the attack.*

David upon the hearing of this story, was greatly incensed, and thus bespoke the messenger, *What! for men with their naked bodies to think of storming stone walls! Why did they not rather make use of mines or engines? One would think they might have taken the example of Ahimelech, the son of Gideon, for a warning, that was slain at Thebes, by a piece of mill-stone thrown down upon his head, by an old woman from the battlements. The man was otherwise very brave; but his temerity brought him to a shameful end; for in all these cases, caution is as necessary as courage, and the safest counsels are the best.*

All people in the business of war, should do well to consult history and experience, what has generally succeeded well, and what otherwise, and to consider upon what point the stress lies, either of the one, or of the other, and thus act accordingly.

While the king was thus expressing his resentment and displeasure at the ill management of the action, the messenger took an occasion privately to tell him of the death of *Uriah.*

Well, said David, these are common accidents; the chance of war is various, and soldiers must content themselves to take the best and worst by turns.

Do you tell Joab what I say; but tell him moreover, that for the future I would rather have him do the business by casting up works, or by machines, than by open force.

But let him know upon the whole, that I would have the city raised and levelled with the ground, and the inhabitants all put to the sword, without sparing so much as one individual person.

With these instructions the messenger went presently away to Joab, and upon the news of Uriah's death, Bathsheba mourned several days for her husband, but as soon as her days of mourning were over, David took her to wife, and had by her a male child soon after.

This match was so far from being acceptable and well-pleasing to God, that he was highly offended at it, and gave the prophet Nathan to understand his displeasure in a dream; blaming David exceedingly for what he had done.

Nathan being a man of great discernment, and considering how little regard princes commonly have in the career of their passions to the rules of justice, chose rather to communicate his message to David in mild terms, by way of allusion, than abruptly accost him by a direct denunciation of the displeasure and threatening of the Almighty; addressing him thus:

There were two men, who lived in the same city; the one had abundance of flocks and herds of all sorts, such as, *oxen, sheep, and the like; and was*

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in fine, a very rich man, the other was maſter of no more than (h) one ewe-lamb; which he brought up, and fed with his own children, and loved it as his daughter.

The rich man had a ſtranger, come to his houſe, whom he was bound in hoſpitality and in honour to entertain; but rather than treat him out of his own ſtore, he ſent and forced away the poor man's only lamb for the ſtranger's ſupper.

"*A villain,* says the king, *(i) in a* "*paſſion, to do a thing ſo baſe and* "*ſo unjuſt! I would have him make* "*four-fold ſatisfaction, and die for* "*it beſides*".

Why then replied Nathan immediately, thou (k) art the man, who deſerves ſuch puniſhment, and out of thy own mouth haſt pronounced judgment upon thyſelf.

The prophet, then gave him an account of his viſion, and of God's high diſpleaſure againſt him, reminding him of his ingratitude to that Providence that had conſtituted him king of Iſrael, and given him the command of all the neigbouring nations thereabouts; delivered him ſeveral times out of Saul's hands, &c. Representing to him the iniquity of his conduct; *that he who had ſo many lawful wives allowed him, ſhould take away, and marry another man's wife, in defiance of God and man, and betray her huſband to the enemy, and to death. The prophet then predicting to him, that he ſtould live to ſee his women raviſhed by one of his own ſons, and that ſon enter into a deſign upon the life of his father; and in a word, that for this ſecret ſin of his, he ſhould be brought to open ſhame and puniſhment; concluding with this preſage, that the ſon of his unlawful love ſhould be very ſhort-lived.*

This denunciation of the prophet, struck David with terror and confuſion and drew from him a penitential confeſſion

(*h*) *One Ewe-Lamb* The poignancy of the parable began now to appear, *the rich man*, we are told, *had exceeding many flocks and herds*, but the whole substance of the other, was comprized in one little ewe-lamb. A simile this, which is most beautifully discriptive, and truly poetical; a lamb is generally used as the emblem of innocence, and a ewe-lamb is an additional circumstance, designedly threwn in to awaken the king's tenderness and pity, from a consideration of the weak and defenceless condition of a female.

(*i*) *In a Paſſion.* This anger of David shews the humanity and compassion of his nature; and was extremely just against one who seemed to have no pity or regard to the little property of another, whose ewe-lamb so beloved by him, must be sacrificed to the power and rapacious will of this rich and over-bearing man; but at the same time, it proves the frailty of human nature, so discerning of faults committed by another, and so blind and forgetful of our own: though he had violently seized Uriah's beloved wife of his bosom, his ewe-lamb, was forgot.

How quick-sighted are we (says our blessed Saviour) in discovering the faults of others, but how blind to our own follies and vices.

(*k*) *Thou art the Man.* This text of scripture shews the wisdom and modesty, as well as courage of the prophet; and is a most useful lesson to ministers, set apart to rebuke vice, by whoever committed, and whether in or out of season; here was honour and respect paid to the dignity and royal character of David; he introduces his divine message and remonstrance by the foregoing striking parable.

He did not immediately and indecently tax him with his crime, which, instead of this softness of his, might have raised his passion, enflamed and roused the natural man, and especially the prince into warmth, instead of conviction; but when he had brought his mind into a right frame, and made fit to receive the reproof properly, and as it was designed, he plainly and without flattery, from this parable, laid his crime before him, which answered the end, and brought him to repentance.

Though we are not rudely to go into kings courts, and pretend to foretell future events, yet reproofs, like every thing else in the ministry and house of God, are to be done decently and in order, with meekness of wisdom, and regard to time, place, and station.

confession with tears, that he had sinned against God.

David being a righteous man, and (this one thing excepted) one who before had never been guilty of the commission of any unjust action, God was pleased to accept of his true repentance, took him into his favour again, and promised to secure him in the enjoyment, both of his kingdom, and of his life.

The prophet having thus executed the divine command, returned to his own habitation; but soon after his departure, the Lord struck the child, that Uriah's wife bare unto David, with a grievous sickness, which was so sensible an affliction to the father, that he took his chamber upon it, and for seven days together, prostrated himself upon the ground, in sackcloth and mourning; nor could he be persuaded by his servants, to receive any sustenance; beseeching Almighty God to spare the child, having the greatest tenderness imaginable for the mother. But his prayers proved ineffectual; for upon the seventh day the child died. (a)

None of the family durst speak a word of it to the king; for he they thought, that was so given up to sorrows, as to deny himself the most necessary comforts and refreshments of life, when the child was only sick, would afflict himself with a more intense and severe abstinence, if he should know it to be dead.

David observed such a disorder in the countenances of his family, that he took it for certain there was something extraordinary in the case, that they durst not acquaint him with, which he concluded could be nothing else but the death of the child: and, upon examining one of his servants about it, he found it so to be. The child being dead, and all mourning and prayer therefore unnecessary, David arose, washed himself, changed his cloaths, aud went directly to the tabernacle to worship; commanding his servants, after this, to set his supper upon the table.

His kindred and domestics were all in admiration and astonishment at a change so unexpected; for while the child was but dangerously ill, there was nothing but passion and extravagance; and now it was dead, the father came to himself again. This was their opinion of the case; but they had yet a curiosity to know what might be the true reason of it; wherein David was very free with them upon a decent intimation of

(a) *The Child Died.* It has been asked, why the death of this child should be deprecated by David in the most solemn manner, and as the greatest punishment, when, had it lived, it would have been a lasting monument of the guilt and infamy of its parents? But the best way to account for this, is to ascribe it to David's excessive fondness for Bathsheba, which so strongly attached him to every offspring of her's, and made him forget every thing in this child, but that motive of endearment.

Besides, it must be allowed, that there is something in human nature, which prompts us to rate things after a very unaccountable manner, by estimating them, not according to their real worth, but according to the trouble and expence, or even distress they cost us.

Nor should it be forgot, that David's excessive mourning proceeded not so much from the fear of losing the child, as from a deep sense of his sin, and of the divine displeasure manifested in the child's sickness; and probably also, from a just apprehension of the great scandal that would be thrown upon the infant by his sin, and which he thought himself bound in justice, as far as he was able, to repair by incessant prayer and intercession, accompanied with tokens of the most sincere and unaffected sorrow and humiliation of his past offences.

the desire they had to be better informed.

While the child was living, said he, *and not quite out of hope of recovery, I omitted no opportunity of application to God for its life; but when I saw it was dead, it would have been a fooliſh thing to torment myſelf any farther to no manner of purpoſe.*

The prudence of this reſolution was highly commended by all that had heard him.

Bathſheba, after this, in her due time, according to the courſe of nature, brought David a ſon; who, by the direction of the Prophet Nathan, gave him the name of *Solomon* (*b*).

David's general, Joab, had by this time ſo diſtreſſed the Ammonites, by cutting them off from all manner of proviſions, that they were almoſt reduced to the laſt extremity of hunger and thirſt; for they had only one little ſpring left them, which they were obliged to draw by ſhort allowances, for fear of exhauſting, or looſing that too.

Joab therefore ſent David a particular account of the ſtate of the ſiege, deſiring the honour of his preſence there, to put the laſt hand himſelf to the deſtruction of the city, as an action worthy to be found upon record in the hiſtory of his other heroical exploits.

David was ſo fully ſatisfied with the wiſdom, faith and zeal of his general, that he put himſelf preſently at the head of his army, and marching to the aſſault of Rabbah; took it by ſtorm, and gave the pillage of it to the ſoldiers, taking only for himſelf a golden crown of the king's, of a talent weight, and a rich ſardonyx upon it, which he wore conſtantly upon his head afterward for an ornament: not to mention an infinite variety of other rich booty that was found in the city.

The inhabitants which remained in the city were ſubjected to the moſt acute as well as abject puniſhment, as were all the other places belonging to the Ammonites, where the ſovereignty of the king of Iſrael was not acknowledged.

But the glories of this conqueſt were ſoon ſullied by a melancholy circumſtance that fell out in David's family.

The king had a daughter as yet a virgin, and highly celebrated for the endowments of her mind, as well as the beauty of her perſon. Her name was *Tamar*, and ſhe and *Abſalom* had one mother.

Amnon, the eldeſt ſon of David, fell deſperately in love with her; and finding, that betwixt her own modeſty, and the watch ſhe had upon her, there was no hope of ſucceeding, he pined away into a kind of languiſhing conſumption.

(*b*) *Solomon*. The word Solomon, is properly derived from *Schalom*, which ſignifies peace, intimating that his reign ſhould be peaceable; but by God's appointment the prophet Nathan gave him the name of Jeddidiah, that is, the beloved of God.

The ſcripture however, never calls him by any other name, than by that of Solomon; for what reaſon, indeed is quite uncertain, unleſs we may hazard a conjecture, that the people, being long haraſſed in war during his father's reign, might perhaps be pleaſed with this name rather than the other, to intimate their hopes and longing deſires of peace.

Jonadab,

Jonadab, his friend and kinsman, and a person of good sense and judgment, taking notice of this change in Amnon, and that he grew every day worse and worse, went to him, and asked him, what he ailed? and in short, if he was not in love? for he had a suspicion of it.

Amnon, without any difficulty, owned himself to have a violent passion for his own sister. Upon this, the other immediately suggested to him a method how he might compass his end.

Jonadab's fatal advice was, for Amnon to pretend sickness, and the first time his father came to visit him, he requested, that he would send his sister to him; this was granted, and Amnon desired to have some cakes of his sister's making, for he could not eat any thing else. Therefore she took the flour, kneaded it, raised and baked it, all in her brother's sight; and in conclusion, offered him some to eat, which he would not so much as taste, but called out to his servants immediately to withdraw, and let nobody come in to trouble him, for he would lay himself to rest.

As soon as the room was cleared of the attendants, he desired his sister to carry what she had prepared for him, into an inner chamber there, which she did, and her brother taking advantage of that privacy, laid hold of her; and by the utmost importunity of a violent passion, pressed and courted her to the gratifying of his brutal appetite.

The innocent virgin, exclaiming all the while to him, *For Shame, for Shame!* not to offer so impious, and so scandalous an action, as it would be to sacrifice himself, and his whole family, to the rage of an unnatural desire.

Let me go, says she, *for the love of God, and keep your exorbitant desires within the compass of law, honesty and religion; or if you cannot master them, try if you can get your father's good-will, and never think of extorting a kindness from me by violence.*

But there was no reasoning, she found, with an impetuous, raging passion. Tamar indeed hoped, for the present, to amuse him with some distant promise of compliance. But all her endeavours were vain; for strength, enforced by a raging passion, overcame every obstacle, and her virtue fell a victim to her brother's inordinate lust.

No sooner had he committed this villainy, and quenched his criminal flame, than his extravagant love was degenerated into the contrary extreme, of implacable hatred; insomuch that he urged her with reproaches and ill language, to depart his chamber, and be gone.

What, said she, *now you have debauched me, am I to be exposed too? and sent away by day-light with all this confusion and horror upon me, to tell the world how barbarously you have used me? Nay, this treatment in cold blood is yet worse, if worse can be, even than the accursed act itself, under the impotency of an ungovernable passion to alleviate the crime.*

But all remonstrance availed not, for

for Amnon determined on her departure, commanded his servants to turn her out of the house.

Thus compelled, she went into the street, with (*c*) ashes on her head, and her vest (such as was then in fashion for persons of her quality) disordered and torn, and proceeded through the city; crying out, and complaining how she had been abused and ravished.

Her brother Absalom had the fortune to meet her in this distraction and dress; and asking her what was the matter? she told him the whole story of her brother's, and the brutal indignity that he offered her.

Absalom informed her, in order to pacify her, that the dishonour was however not so great, considering it was the act of her own brother, which for the present subsided her clamour. After which, she lived for some time single in the house of her brother Absalom.

When the news was carried to king David, he was infinitely troubled at it; but Amnon being his eldest, and his beloved son, he was yet loath to put him to extremities. Absalom, however, bore him a mortal grudge, and waited only a fair opportunity for revenge (*d*).

Two years after the rape of Tamar, Absalom having appointed a sheep-sheering at Baal-Hazor, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, invited his father and his brothers to the meeting. His father excused himself, offering as a plea, the inconvenience and expence that attended his removal from place to place; so that Absalom desired leave only for his brothers, which being obtained, he gave his domestics this order, that upon giving them the sign, when Amnon should be in his cups, they should fall upon him and kill him.

Absalom's stewards accordingly executed most punctually their master's command; for as soon as they observed Amnon waxed merry, and therefore not on his guard, they fell upon him, and slew him on the spot.

CHAP.

(*c*) *Ashes on her head.* That this was the ancient manner of expressing grief and concern for any loss or calamity, is evident from that passage of the Prophet concerning the people of Tyre; *They shall cry bitterly, cast dirt upon their heads, and wallow themselves in the ashes*, Ezek. xxvii. 30.

From the behaviour of *Achilles*, upon the death of *Patroclus*, as we have it in *Homer*:

Then sordid dust upon his head he cast,
And with his hands his manly looks disgrac'd.

And from what *Mezentius* did upon the death of *Lausus*, according to *Virgil*:

With sordid dust defiles his silver hairs,
And to the skies, his helpless hands he rears.

(*d*) *Revenge.* As Absalom neither threatened, nor expostulated, nor even took the least notice of what had passed; Amnon lulled himself into a belief, that his brother would not trouble him; whereas he was all the time contriving means to obtain some terrible revenge.

CHAP. VI.

ABSALOM FLIES AFTER THE MURDER OF HIS BROTHER. JOAB'S INVENTION TO RESTORE HIM TO HIS FAVOUR. ABSALOM OBTAINS LEAVE TO GO TO HEBRON ON A PERFIDIOUS DESIGN. DAVID QUITS HIS RESIDENCE AT JERUSALEM. DIVERS STRATAGEMS CONCERTED TO DEPRIVE HIM OF HIS CROWN AND DIGNITY. ABSALOM PARTICULARLY SEEKS TO OBTAIN BY FRAUD HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM; IS ASSISTED IN HIS IMPIOUS PROCEEDINGS BY SEVERAL FALSE COUTIERS. DAVID RECEIVES NEWS OF HIS SON'S DISOBEDIENCE AND REBELLION. ENGAGETH WITH HIM. TOTALLY DEFEATS HIM. HE FLIES, AND BEING FOUND HANGING BY THE HAIR TO A BOUGH, IS SLAIN BY JOAB.

THE fate of Amnon so terrified all the brothers, that they rode precipitately to acquaint their father, assured that he had likewise a design upon all their lives.

In the interim, comes a fore-runner to David, with news, that Absalom had put all his brothers to death. It was so terrible a surprize to David, to hear of the loss of so many of his sons, and by the hand of their own brother, that he abandoned himself, to an inconsolate desparation; and without any further enquiry, or waiting for a confirmation of the report, though a wickedness almost incredible, he gave himself up to an insupportable anguish of thought; tearing his garments, and casting himself prostrate on the ground, lamenting not only the murdered, but the murderer himself.

But Jonadab, the son of Shimei, David's brother, desired him to ruminate upon the matter, with temperance and moderation, assuring him that he could not believe the report till further confirmation, though it was reasonable to expect that he might avenge himself of Amnon.

While they were in discourse, they heard the trampling of horses, and the hurry of people as approaching; and these were the king's sons, who had made their escape from the feast at the house of their brother.

The greeting of the father and his sons was not without tears on both sides; the father surprized at the sight of them living, whom he took to be dead: the sons lamenting the loss of their brother, and the father deploring the barbarous murder of a son. So there was sufficient cause for grief and lamentation.

Absalom, in the mean time retired to *Geshur*, (*e*) where he conti-

(*e*) *Geshur.* In the case of wilful murder, the Mosaic law runs thus: *That the avenger of blood shall slay the murderer; when he meeteth him he shall slay him*, Numb. xxxv. 21. From whence it follows, that it was not in any man's power to protect the wilful murderer, because the avenger of blood, that is, the nearest relations of the person murdered, might with impunity kill him, wherever he met him. As Absalom therefore was obnoxious to this law, his life was every moment in danger; and as there were no cities of refuge in his own country, that would, in this case yield him any protection, he was forced to flee out of the kingdom to his mother's father.

nued three years in the house of his mother's father, a person of eminence in that country.

David had by this time a great desire to recall Absalom, not to punish him, but to have him home again; for the severity of his displeasure was now well nigh over; and these charitable inclinations were dextrously enough managed to Absalom's advantage, by the friendship of Joab, who enjoyed the king's confidence in order to this end, he dealt with an ancient woman, who was to put herself in mourning, as a person in great distress, and as an humble supplicant, to present the king with her case, in words to the following import.

That two of her ſons in the country had an unhappy quarrel, which grew to ſuch animoſity, that they fought upon it, and one of them was killed.

Some of his friends who was ſlain, demanded juſtice upon him that had killed him. So ſhe was to beg of his majeſty the life of her ſon, as the only hope and ſtay of her old age.

She had no proſpect of relief, but in his majeſty's clemency; for her ſon's enemies were ſo malicious, that nothing elſe could ſatisfy them, than the interpoſition of the king's authority.

She performed her part, and the king granted her request; whereupon with a dutiful acknowledgment of the king's grace and favour to an ancient woman, and the mother of one only child, entreated another grant from his royal bounty.

Her suit was, *that the king would in the firſt place be pleaſed to pardon his own ſon Abſalom; for in beginning with a compaſſion to him, it would be effectually the ratifying of her own ſon's caſe, in his own family. Adding, it would be very hard, that for a father to loſe one ſon by miſadventure, and to kill another himſelf.*

The king presently surmized that this was a contrivance of Joab's; and upon discoursing with the woman, found his conjecture to be true. Upon this discovery, David called for Joab, and told him that he had gained his point, and was now at liberty to bring Absalom back again, when he thought fit; for his anger had subsided, and he had freely forgiven him.

Joab was very glad to hear it, did reverence to the king, hastened away to Geshur, and brought Absalom back with him to Jerusalem. The king being told of his coming, sent him word, that matters were not as yet in so good a disposition as that it would be proper for him to appear in his presence; so that Absalom kept himself out of the king's sight, within his own walls, and with his private family. He had gone thorough much care and trouble; and his entertainment of late had been rather coarse and delicate; in short he had lived in a manner not suitable to the dignity of a prince of the blood. But he still retained the beauty and gracefulness of his person to the highest degree of perfection. He cut his hair every twelve months; in the compass of which time, it grew up to the weight of two hundred shekels; that is about thirty three ounces.

In

In this obscure state and condition, he lived about two years near Jerusalem, and had children; three sons and one daughter, who proved to be a miracle of a beauty. She was married afterward to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon; and had a son by him, whose name was *Abia*.

Absalom finding himself uneasy under his present circumstances, sent to Joab to use his interest with his father towards regaining him admission into his royal presence, and, in short, towards procuring him a perfect and absolute reconciliation. He waited a while for an answer; but receiving no satisfaction upon his message, sent some of his people to a neighbouring field of Joab's, to burn his corn as it stood there upon the ground.

Joab came to him, and expostulating the matter with him, asked him what he had ever done to deserve such unkind treatment at his hands? *Why, replied Absalom, I had no way of getting you to me but that. I wrote to you about interceding for me to my father, and you have done nothing in it I perceive. Pray will you try if you can pacify him; for at this rate if he goes on still to be inexorable, I am in a worse condition at home than I was in my banishment.*

Joab took pity of him upon this discourse, and plied the king so artfully and so effectually on his behalf, that his heart relented, and Absalom was immediately sent for to attend his father. He cast himself at the king's feet upon his first entrance into the room, and begged pardon for all his misdoings, whereupon David with his right hand took him up again with the assurance of a solemn promise, that all old offences should be for ever buried in oblivion.

Absalom being re-established in the good opinion and esteem of his father, in a short time furnished himself with a splendid equipage, with chariots and horses; a numerous train and retinue of servants, and no less than fifty men to attend him as his body-guards. He was the first man still at the king's levee; not forgetting, on the other hand, to take all occasions also to ingratiate himself with the multitude, and to keep fair report with the people. If any man had cause to be heard, and came for justice, he would address him in these familiar terms, *Friend, what is thy name? What countryman? What business? Can I do thee any good?* and the like.

When he found people out of humour, and dissatisfied with a cross verdict, or a hard judgment, (as they pretended;) *Why this it is, he would say, the king has evil counsellors about him. Nay, and God help him, mistakes the point himself sometimes, as well as another. Well! and so God speed ye my friends; if I had been in somebody's place, things should never have gone at this rate.* This was his method of stealing the affections of the people, and moulding them for his design; and the policy proved too effectual.

Having thus worked himself into the favour of the people, and gained over to his interest a very numerous and powerful party of zealous adherents, he began ambitiously to aspire after

after his father's crown, and to promote his impious designs, solicited of David permission to go to Hebron, in order to perform a solemn vow that he had made, during the course of his exile. Having obtained his request, he took a prodigious multitude; some whom he invited, and others that came voluntarily with him. Among the rest was *Ahithophel* the *Gilonite*, David's prime minister, with two hundred men of Jerusalem, who came thither to sacrifice, without the least imagination of a conspiracy. At length however, the plot took, and Absalom, by the common voice of the people, was proclaimed king.

The news of such ungrateful behaviour in his son, struck the king with surprize and consternation; he was astonished to think of a rebellious usurpation, from a wretch that could so soon forget his own late guilt, and his father's mercy, as to revolt into a second apostacy, so much more flagitious than the former; for he was first to lay violent hands upon his father's kingdom, though he himself knew it to be the special gift of God. And after that, to practice upon his very life too.

David being in this streight, bethought himself of passing the river Jordan into some place more secure; and therefore with the advice of some of his intimate friends, what course to take in this sedicious juncture, he resolved to leave the care of his palace to ten of his concubines, quit Jerusalem, and commit the issue to God.

He accordingly departed with great multitudes of people that carefully adhered to him, and joined themselves in his train, especially his own six hundred friends, that kept so close to him when he was hunted up and down by Saul, from one hiding-place to another.

The High-Priests, Abiathar and Zadoc, and all the Levites there, were for going with him, and taking the ark along with them; but upon very good reasons he prevailed with them to stay, telling them, that God's Providence was sufficient for his preservation, without any necessity of the holy ark being upon the place.

His last charge to them was, to secure some private method of conveyance, whereby to send him speedy intelligence of whatever might occur during his absence, that related to his most important concern; and they acquitted themselves of that commission with great faith and industry; for *Ahimaax*, the son of *Zadoc*, and *Jonathan*, the son of *Abiathar*, *Ittai*, the Gittite, had so great a zeal for his own personal duty, and the service of his master, that he forced himself along with him, though he pressed him earnestly against it.

While the king and his adherents were ascending mount *Olivet* barefooted, and with every token of humiliation, tears filled the eyes of all present, and he received information that Ahithophel had deserted his cause, and revolted to Absalom.

This proving to David one of the most affecting circumstances that had befallen him. He prayed to God to infatuate him, and to turn his wisdom into foolishness. He was a clear-

clear-sighted man, and of great penetration, and there was nothing David so much dreaded, as the policy of his councils.

When he had gained the mountain top, he looked back upon the city, shedding tears, and uttering ejaculations, as one that was now taking his last leave of his government.

In this state of perplexity, he casually met his tried friend and faithful subject *Hushai*, with his garments torn, and ashes upon his head, lamenting the transitory state of all things below the sun.

David bade him be of good cheer, and bare the present calamity with resignation and patience; and urged him finally, with great earnestness, to go back again to Jerusalem, where he might behave himself like one of Absalom's party; pry into his counsels and designs, and by thwarting Ahithophel's measures, do his master infinitely better service, than by staying with him.

Hushai yielded to his persuasions; and so taking his leave of David, returned to Jerusalem, Absalom himself coming thither not long after.

David in the mean while passing forward, met with Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, to whom he had committed the management of the estate he had bestowed upon the son of his dear friend Jonathan. He was driving two asses before him, and offered David and his men to take what they pleased of what he had, if there was any thing they liked.

The question was put to Ziba upon this occasion, *What was become of his master?* He answered, *He left him at Jerusalem, in hopes that upon the present distracted state of affairs, the people, in honour to the memory of his father Saul, might be prevailed upon to chuse him king.*

David, justly incensed at so flagrant an instance of ingratitude, resumed his grant of the lands made to Mephibosheth, and bestowed them on Ziba, as the most deserving person of the two, and with a view of keeping him a friend to his interest.

As the king proceeded in his march and approached Bahurim, there came out of that place a kinsman of Saul's, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and assaulted him with curses and with stones, and the more David's friends took his part on the one side, the more foul and scandalous were the reproaches of Shimei on the other.

He reviled David with being a delighter in blood, and the cause of all their miseries, and bade him depart out of the country, like an insolent, execrable wretch; giving God thanks for that retaliation upon him, by his son, for the indignities that he had formerly put upon his Lord and Father.

These rude and barbarous outrages, provoked the indignation of all that heard them; and Abishai had certainly killed him for it, if David had not interposed, and prevented it, by thus adressing him.

Pray hold your hand, and do not add mischief to mischief. Things are bad enough already, and do not make them worse. I look upon the clamours of this clown, as I do upon the bawling of a mad dog, that God hath let

let looſe upon me; and his holy will be done.

Why ſhould you wonder at the unmannerly revilings of a ſcoundrel, when at the ſame time I am worſe treated by my own ungracious ſon.

But there is a merciful God above, who, in the end, will deliver the innocent out of the hands of the oppreſſors, and give us victory over all our enemies; wherefore in the name, and under the protection of that God, let us proceed forward on our journey.

As David advanced coolly, on one ſide of the mountain, Shimei ran railing and curſing over-againſt him on the other.

After a long and wearisome march, they arrived at length at the bank of the river Jordan, where David muſtered and refreſhed his troops.

Abſalom, and his great counſellor Ahithophel, were by this time come to Jeruſalem, where they were received with ſhouts and acclamations by a vaſt concourſe of people; and among the reſt, by David's friend Huſhai, who together with the people exclaimed, God ſave the king, wiſhing him a long and happy reign.

Abſalom, upon this encounter, aſked Huſhai, how it come to paſs, that he who was eſteemed ſo eminent and faithful a ſervant to his father, ſhould now deſert his former maſter, and come over to him?

Huſhai anſwered him diſcreetly, thus, *There is no contending with the will of God, and the conſent of the people; and ſo long as you have them on your ſide, you may be ſure of my fidelity.*

It is from God that you have recieved your kingdom; and if you can think me worthy of a place in the number of thoſe you will vouchſafe to own, you ſhall find me as true to you, as ever I was to your father.

No man is to account the preſent ſtate of things grievous, ſo long as the government continues in the ſame line, and a ſon of the ſame family ſucceeds to the throne

These words of Huſhai to Abſalom put an end to all jealouſies.

The moſt material buſineſs now to be purſued was, to determine on the next ſtep, and Ahithopel was called in, to adviſe about it. The counſel he gave was, for Abſalom to go in and lie with all his father's concubines; enforcing his advice by obſerving, *This would fix the people, and make them ſo much the bolder and firmer to the preſent ſtate, when they ſhould ſee the breach advanced beyond all poſſibility of reconciliation; for as matters now ſtand people would be apt to ſay, Why the father and the ſon may come to an agreement for ought we know; and if they ſhould chance to adjuſt differences in the concluſion, Where are we? ſo that it would be dangerous to declare under ſuch uncertainty.*

Abſalom, in ſhort took Ahithophel's counſel, and commanded his ſervants to erect him a tent in the palace where he lay with his father's concubines, in the ſight of the people.

This was according to what the prophet Nathan foretold would befall David.

Having proceeded agreeable to Ahithophel's plan, the next point under

under consideration was, how they should go on with the prosecution of the war?

His answer was this, *That if they would but put him at the head of twelve thousand chosen men, he would undertake therewith to destroy David, and secure the public peace to the people, and the government to Absalom, both at one stroke.*

Absalom was much of Ahithophel's opinion; but willing however to have Hushai's also he demanded his advice upon the case.

Hushai, that was David's true friend, and ever so reputed, finding the advice to be shrewd and dangerous, did what he could to divert Absalom from it, by giving his judgment another way, after this manner.

Sir, I need not tell you that your father is a valiant man, and that he hath a great many brave men about him, with whom, in all encounters he hath ever come off victorious.

You know him to be a soldier too, and a man of stratagem, as well as of courage. He will most infallibly have advice of our approach; and in some valley, wood, or behind some rock, perhaps, lie ready to betray us into an ambush. Or suppose we should attempt to engage them, they will order the matter so as to manage their retreat by little and little, till they have drawn us into the snare, when David's whole body will fall upon us before we know where we are.

Now I submit myself to your judgment, betwixt the consternation it will cause on the one hand, and the incouragement it will give on the other, What a confusion this way of proceeding will create among us?

And now you have heard both opinions, you may follow either Ahithophel's or mine, which appears most reasonable.

Having said thus much of what ought not to be done, he craved leave to observe what he thought advisable under these circumstances to be done.

Let the whole nation of the Israelites be summoned to appear, with all their troops, at some certain time and place to make war against David. And when they are met, do you yourself (addressing himself to Absalom) *take the command of the whole into your own hand, without trusting to deputies. When this is done, David must either expose himself in the plain field, or fly to some strong holds, or walled towns.*

If he keeps the plain, his forces are so few and inconsiderable, compared to the many thousands in Israel, wholly devoted to your interest, who will value themselves upon an opportunity being offered them to exert their zeal in serving their prince and country, that your power and strength being hereby so much superior to his, you are sure of obtaining an easy conquest over him.

Or if he shall go the other way to work, of hiding and skulking up and down, to keep upon the defensive, there are twenty ways, by mining, battering, starving, and the like, that will certainly reduce him.

This advice was generally applauded, insomuch that Absalom preferred it to the counsel of Ahithophel, and

and the event proved that the interposing hand of an all-wise Providence had great concern in it.

Hushai having brought matters to this issue, hastened with all possible speed to the High-Priests Zadock and Abiathar; with an account of what had passed at the council betwixt Ahithophel and himself, and how things were carried; desiring them to dispatch an express immediately to David, with a caution, by all means to pass the river Jordan that very night, for if his son should either get intelligence where he was, or change his mind, he might fall in upon him before he could get over.

The High-Priests had lodged their sons, for the sake of convenience, out of the town, as well as provided a trusty maid servant, to carry them the intelligence, which they were to transmit forthwith to David.

Upon the receipt of this information, they made what haste they could with it, as became dutiful and faithful servants. But by the time they were advanced about a quarter of a mile upon their way, they were discovered by certain horsemen; and Absalom having notice of it, gave orders immediately for the taking of them up.

The messengers were quickly aware of their danger, and so turned out of the way towards *Bahurim*, a small village near Jerusalem; where they met with a woman who was so charitable as to conceal them, by letting them down into a well, and throwing some skins of beasts over the mouth of it.

Although they were concealed with much art and expedition, the pursuers came up to the house, and examined the woman very strictly, whether she had seen any such men or not. She acknowledged that two such men drank at the gate just before and then went their way, assuring them moreover, that if they made haste after them, they might easily be overtaken.

When they had searched up and down a long time after them to no purpose, they returned to their quarters fatigued and disappointed.

As soon as the woman saw that all was safe, and the coast clear, she drew the young men out of the well, and they proceeded on their journey time enough to give David a seasonable account of Absalom's design. It was late before they got thither, but David however got his people over the river the same night.

Ahithophel was much piqued, that Absalom should reject his counsel, and at the same time embrace Hushai's; so that he mounted his ass, and went home to *Galmon*, where he called his family together, and told them the advice he had given Absalom, but that he would not follow it; and that in a short time, that refusal would be his ruin; for David would certainly get the better of him, and soon after recover his kingdom.

This conduct was followed by this declaration, *Now, it is more honourable for me, to die with resolution like a man of honour, than to wait sneaking till David returns, and then*

then to be put to death at laſt for the ſervices I have done the ſon againſt the father.

Having thus ſpoken, he withdrew into a private apartment in his houſe, (agitated with (*m*) grief,) and hanged himſelf. Conſcious of his unjuſt and wicked behaviour in eſpouſing the impious claim of a rebellious ſon againſt the equitable government of a pious and indulgent father.

David having now paſſed the river Jordan, came to Mahanaim,* the faireſt and ſtrongeſt city in that tract of land; where he was treated by the principal perſons of the whole country with the higheſt inſtances of generoſity and good-will, partly out of humanity, with regard to the neceſſities of his preſent condition, and partly out of reverence to the memory of his former ſtate.

There was *Siphar*, a prince of *Ammon*; *Barzillai* and *Machir*, two principal men of *Gilead*, &c. Theſe generous perſons took ſuch care of David, and his people, and provided for them all that could poſſibly miniſter to their comfort and refreſhment, after an anxious ſtate of mind and toilſome adventure.

Abſalom in the mean time had paſſed the river with a mighty army againſt his father, and encamped not far from Mahanaim, a town of Gilead, having made his kinſman, *Amaſa*, general, in the place of Joab, Amaſa, being the ſon of *Ithra* by Abigail. Now Abigail, and Zeruiah, the mother of Joab, were ſiſters.

King David having reviewed his forces, found he muſtered no more than four thouſand ſtrong; but notwithſtanding the ſmallneſs of his number, he determined, by the ſtrength and favour of the Almighty, to attack his inſolent and impious ſon, eſteeming ſuch reſolution preferable to a lame inactivity, that might furniſh him with an opportunity of making an aſſault.

Thus reſolved, he appointed his officers their reſpective departments, and divided the little body of his army into three parts. Joab had the firſt diviſion; Abiſhai, the ſecond; and his old friend Ittai the Gittite, the third.

David would have gone himſelf in perſon; but his friends, for very good reaſons, oppoſed it: for, ſaid they, *Should we be beaten, and you yourſelf in the field, the whole cauſe would be loſt without any reſource.*

But otherwiſe, if one diviſion ſhould have the ill-hap to be worſted, the reſt might repair to himſelf, and be impowered thereby to re-inforce themſelves to make another ſally on the enemy.

Beſide, the king's not being upon

(*m*) *Grief.* Some of the moſt learned Jewiſh doctors affirm, that Ahithophel did not hang himſelf, but that he was ſtifled with grief: but nothing can be more plain and poſitive than the words of the ſacred ſcripture, and thoſe commentors, who to eſtabliſh their own fancies, impoſe forced conſtructions on the word of God, are the greateſt enemies to divine revelation. Nothing can be more natural, than to ſuppoſe, that this ambitious politician would lay violent hands on himſelf, when he found his council rejected.

* *Mahanaim.* This was a city in the tribe of Gad, built in the place where Jacob was met by the Angels of God in his return from Laban.

the ſpot, would poſſeſs the enemy with an apprehenſion, that he had another body of troops in reſerve.

This motion was carried, and the king was prevailed upon to ſtay at Mahanaim, David then abjured his friends by all the rites of honour, gratitude, and conſcience, to acquit themſelves in their duty; and in caſe God ſhould give them a victory, to ſpare the life of the young man; for he durſt not truſt himſelf with his own life after the death of Abſalom, David's addreſs was followed with a thouſand bleſſings and good wiſhes; and then he diſpatched them to the army.

When Abſalom ſaw that Joab had drawn up his diviſion upon a plain, with the wood of * Ephraim at his back, he diſpoſed of his own troops likewiſe into the ſame form over againſt the other. The engagement ſoon commenced, and there was great bravery on both ſides. One part contending for the recovery of what David had loſt, and the other for the defence and maintenance of what Abſalom had got, they appeared to fight with equal courage and reſolution, being equally intent on carrying their point. Abſalom's men fought ſometime upon a point of honour, and to avoid the infamy of being worſted by ſo inconſiderable a party. David's men on the other hand, for the glory of routing ſo many thouſands of the enemy upon ſuch a diſproportion.

In the concluſion, David's veterans behaved bravely, and like themſelves; for they broke the enemy's order, and put them to a total rout, getting the chaſe of them over woods, mountains and craggs, whitherſoever they fled; ſome they killed; ſome they took; and more were loſt in the purſuit than in the battle. Near twenty thouſand men were reputed to be ſlain in that day's action.

Now Abſalom was ſo remarkable both for his beauty, and his ſtature, that he was every body's mark: ſo that for fear of being taken alive, he mounted the fleeteſt mule he could procure, and fled away as faſt as poſſible. By the celerity of the mule's courſe, the force of the wind blew up his hair, ſo that it catched hold on the rugged bough of a tree; and the mule running forward from under him, left him ſuſpended in the air, and continued her ſpeed, as if ſhe had her rider ſtill upon her back. One of David's ſoldiers ſaw this, and carryed the tidings thereof to Joab, who bad him go quickly, and diſpatch him, and he ſhould have fifty ſhekels of ſilver for his pains. But the ſoldier bravely replied, I would not do ſuch a thing to the ſon of my lord and maſter for two thouſand; eſpecially conſidering the charge the king gave in your hearing, not to touch the life of the young man.

Joab hereupon commanded him to conduct him to the place where he ſaw him hanging; whither when he came he pierced him through the heart with his javelin.

His armour-bearers that were then

* *Ephraim.* So called here, becauſe, as ſome think, the Ephraimites drove their cattle over Jordan, to feed them in this wood. But it moſt probably had this name from the great ſlaughter of the Ephraimites by Jephthah.

preſent,

present, took down the body from the tree, and cast it into a deep pit, piling a great heap of *(f)* stones upon it, in the form of a sepulchre. This being done, Joab sounded a retreat to take his men off from the chace, and save the effusion of more blood in a civil war.

Absalom had already erected a marble column, with an inscription upon it, in a place called the king's valley, about two furlongs from Jerusalem, which he called by the name of the Hand of Absalom, to perpetuate his memory, as he said, even if he should leave no children behind him.

He had three sons, and one daughter, who was married to *Rehoboam* the son of *Solomon*, by whom he had *Abijah*, his immediate successor.

(f) Stones upon it. The justice of God is very observable in bringing Absalom to so condign a punishment: for, in the first place, he was hanged, as it were, and this was by the law declared to be an accursed death, Deut. xxi. 23. And afterwards he was in some measure stoned, which by the same law, was the particular kind of death prescribed for a stubborn and rebellious son. A lasting monument of the vengeance of God, against those children, who are so hardened in wickedness, as to lift their hands against their parents.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

DAVID LAMENTETH ABSALOM. PARDONS SHIMEI. SHEBA ENDEAVOURS TO PREJUDICE THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST DAVID. JOAB TREACHEROUSLY SLAYS AMASA, WHO HAD BEEN SENT AGAINST SHEBA BY DAVID. THE CITY IS SAVED BY THE COUNCIL OF A WISE WOMAN. A FAMINE INFLICTED ON THE ISRAELITES FOR THEIR FORMER BREACH OF FAITH WITH THE GIBEONITES. DAVID DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES. IS WELL NIGH SLAIN BY THEM. RESCUED BY ABISHAI. ENCOUNTERS IN VARIOUS BATTLES AGAINST THE PHILISTINES WITH SUCCESS. DAVID'S CHAMPIONS. THE PEOPLE PUNISHED FOR DAVID'S NUMBERING THEM. HE IS PARDONED ON REPENTANCE. THE PESTILENCE STOPPED. DAVID LAYS A PLAN FOR BUILDING A SOLEMN TEMPLE.

THE adherents of Absalom having lost their presumptuous leader, became intimidated, and privately stole away to their respective places of abode. Ahimaaz the son of Zadock the High-Priest, then applied to Joab for permission to go and acquaint the king with the news of the victory obtained over his enemies.

Joab gave him this answer, that it would not look well for him who had been always heretofore the messenger of good news to the king, to be now the first man to tell him of his son's death: and then called to Cushi, sent him on the errand, and ordered him to tell the king what he himself had seen. Ahimaaz intreated Joab a second time, to let him carry the tidings only of the victory, but not of the death of Absalom.

Joab upon this importunity gave him leave, and he knowing the nearest way better than the other, got thither before him. David was at this time sitting at the gate, with longing expectations to know the event of the battle, when a scout brought him word, that he saw (*g*) one running that way, but he was too far off to discern who it was.

The king looked upon it as a good omen, and the scout immediately upon this told the king that he dis-

(*g*) *One.* This was a token that the messenger brought good tidings, and his party were employed in pursuit of the enemy; for if his party had been worsted, these that fled would have come in crowds to the city for refuge.

covered

covered another, which gave him still more hope than before.

The messenger being now come within distance, was found to be Ahimaaz, the son of Zadock the High-Priest, who came first. This encouraged the king, who exclaimed, *This is the man that moſt certainly brings me good tidings.* The words were hardly uttered, when Ahimaaz cast himself at David's feet to do him reverence, and asked him, *What news from the army?* he replied, great success and victory.

David then asked him; *What was become of Abſalom?*

Ahimaaz answered, that as soon as ever he saw the enemy routed, he came away with the intelligence; but that he heard a mighty clamour and shouting all the while, upon the pursuit of Absalom; and Joab sent him away in such haste, that his orders were only to carry the news of the victory, without any mention of Absalom. By this time Cushi was at the king's feet, with the tidings of a victory; and the king putting the same question to him as to the other, viz. What was become of Absalom? *May it be,* says Cushi, *with all the enemies of my lord the king as it is with Abſalom.* These words turned a day of joy and triumph into a day of mourning. It proved so to the king, for the loss of Absalom; and to the people also; for David withdrew himself upon it out of sight, to the top of one of the highest turrets about the city, beating his breast, and tearing his hair, with cries and exclamations, *Ah my ſon Abſalom, my ſon Abſalom, Oh that I myſelf could have but died with thee, my ſon!* David was by nature extremely fond and tender of all his children, but his love to Absalom was peculiar, and in a more intense degree than to any of the rest.

As the king had discovered these tokens of grief, Joab, and his victorious army were discouraged from entering the town in a joyous and triumphant manner; and therefore when they approached, hanged down their heads, assumed dejected countenances, and appeared more like men conquered, than conquerors.

David, continued so long in this abandoned dejection that Joab, without ceremony, broke in upon him in the very agony of his passion, reasoning and expostulating with him in this manner:

"Sir, do you know what you do? are you aware of the dishonour you bring upon yourself by this wilful and effeminate lamentation? It makes you look as if you hated your friends, that have saved your life at the hazard of their own; nay, for yourself and your family too; and at the same time cherished a kindness even for those of your enemies, which divine justice hath taken away in your favour, by the stroke of a most righteous vengeance, if Absalom had carried the day, and settled himself in his usurpation, who would have bemoaned, either your fate or ours? for we had most certainly been cut to pieces, every living soul: nay, you yourself, and your children, would have fallen the first victim to their cruelty; then your enemies would have rejoiced and gloried in

your ruin, and it would have been death for any man to have but so much as pitied us. Does not your conscience as well as your honour check you for this unmanly tenderness, for the memory of so implacable an enemy. He was your son, 'tis true, but a most ungracious one; and you cannot be just to God's Providence, without acknowledging the blessing of his being taken away. Assume then a cheerful countenance, shew yourself to your people, and tell them, that it is to their loyalty and bravery, *(under God)* that you are indebted for the honour of this day; for if you go on as you have begun, I will infallibly cause your kingdom and your army to reject you, and place another on the throne; and then you will find a more real and sensible cause for such grievous affliction."

The conduct of Joab, though bold and resolute, reduced David to some degree of reason, insomuch that he began once more to direct his attention to business of state and the concerns of the people committed to his care, shewing himself in public as usual, and assuming a more placid and cheerful aspect. This change of humour wrought so effectually upon the people, that they came in multitudes from all parts to pay him their reverence.

The face of things being thus changed, Absalom's men that fled from the late battle, and were got home again, sent messengers up and down, from place to place, to remind their friends of the infinite obligations they lay under to David upon all accounts, and particularly for the toils and hazards he had undergone in his own person, for the vindication of their liberty; how ungratefully they had behaved themselves in their revolt, and that they had nothing more to do now, than to lay themselves at his feet; beg his pardon, and beseech him once again to receive them into his care and protection, as formerly; especially as the person was now no more whom they had most unjustly and injuriously set up in his stead. The king had addresses of this kind sent him in abundance, which he still communicated by letters to the High-Priests Zadock and Abiathar, with certain hints, how they were to manage the heads of the tribe of Judah toward his restoration. They insinuated accordingly, how shameful it would be for them to stand looking on, and let others go before them, in doing a common right to a prince so generous, and of their own tribe and extraction.

This way of proceeding created an emulation among them, who should be foremost.

They were likewise to expostulate on the cause with Amasa, the enemy's general, wherefore he himself, the nephew of David, by his own sister, should not dispose the army to a sense of their duty, and the restoring of the government to the right owner.

They told Amasa, that for what was past, he might be sure of his pardon; and that they doubted not but he might have the same command under David that he had under Absalom.

In

In this manner the High-Priests proceeded with the heads of each tribe, and by this means brought over Amasa to the interest of David.

The tribe of Juda were the first that sent their commissioners to invite the king back to the exercise of his government, and betwixt the influence of their example, and the credit of Amasa they were all ordered to attend, and receive the king at Jerusalem.

Of all the tribes, that of Judah were the most forward and gave the most convincing proofs of their loyalty; for they went to the very bank of the river Jordan to meet him.

There was Shimei, the son of Gera at the head of a thousand Benjamites. There was also Ziba, Saul's freeman, and his fifteen children, and twenty servants; who together with the tribe of Judah, laid a bridge over the river, for the more commodious passage of David and his troops.

Upon his coming to the river, the tribe of Judah, were the first that saluted him; and Shimei advancing to the bridge, threw himself at David's feet, begging his pardon for the indignities he had offered him; beseeching him to pass it all over, and that it might never rise in judgment against him when he should be re-instated in his kingdom. Desiring moreover, that his early repentance and return to his allegiance, might atone for his past faults.

Shimei, on this application, was thus accosted, by Abishai, Joab's brother "And do you think to come off so easily; you that could have the face to blaspheme the king that God had set over you at so unpardonable a rate?"

But David checked his intemperate zeal, with these words, "Be silent, ye sons of Zeruiah; without blowing the coal, and stiring up new broils; for I would have you look upon this as the first day of my reign; and take notice of what I do now declare upon my oath.

I do freely forgive all the world, and I do promise that no person shall suffer for any thing done against me, or against any body else for my sake, of what king or quality soever; so you may set your heart at rest, Shemei your life is in no danger."

Upon this assurance he made his reverence and went his way.

After him came Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, with as forlorn and miserable an aspect as can be conceived; for upon David's being forced away from the palace, this good man reckoning the king's calamity as his own, bound himself by a vow, never to cut his hair, (*h*) wash his feet,

(*h*) *Wash his Feet.* These where some of the instances wherein the Jews were wont to express their mourning; and they seem to be here mentioned as an evidence of the falsehood, of Ziba's information against his master, since no one who neglected himself to such degree, would be suspected of aspiring to the crown. Not dressing his feet, may signify, either not cutting his nails, or his not washing his feet, which the Jews used frequently to do, because of the bad smell which was natural to them, as well as the Arabians, and some other nations; and therefore his omission of this could not but make him offensive to himself. Not trimming his beard, was letting the hair grow negligently and without any order, for the manner of the Jews was to cut the lip upwards, and what grew likewise on the cheek, but was on the chin, and so backwards to the ear, that they suffered to grow. And not changing his cloaths, must import his not putting on any clean linen, but wearing the same garments all the while.

feet, or change his cloaths, till it might please God to restore him.

Ziba took this opportunity of traducing his master to the king: for upon David's asking him how he came to leave him, when he was under persecution, he laid the fault upon Ziba, for not obeying his orders; but on the contrary, treating him like a slave, nothwithstanding the express charge he had given him to have all necessaries in readiness for his journey.

Mephibosheth thus represented the true state of the case, "If I had the use of my legs, as other people have, this should not have hindered me neither.

"Nay, farther adding, and which is more, he has not only disappointed me in the exercise of my duty, but I perceive he has done me spiteful offices, and aspersed my character to yourself, but you are so just, and so great a lover of God, and of truth, that I am sure your generosity and your wisdom will never entertain a calumny to my prejudice.

Our family have had the experience of your piety, modesty and goodness, to a degree never to be forgotten, in passing over and pardoning the innumerable hazards and persecutions that you were exposed unto in the days and by the contrivance of my grandfather; when all our lives were forfeited, and in your power and at your mercy; but then after all the gracious tenderness, your superadding the honour of taking me to your table, as a friend, and as a guest; and likewise a person so obnoxious, in regard of my relations, nothing could be either greater, or more obliging."

David heard all this, without either animadverting upon Mephibosheth, or putting Ziba's credit to the test; but he told him, that having given the whole estate to Ziba, he would order him the one half of it back again.

"Mephibosheth replied, "Nay, Sir, so long as I have the satisfaction of seeing my lord the king upon his throne again, even let Ziba take the whole."

Bazillai the Gileadite, a man of real honour and true valour, who during the late war, had signalized himself in the service of his king and country, insisted on accompanying David in his way to the river Jordan.

The king pressed him with great earnestness to go along with him to Jerusalem, promising that he would be as good as a father to him, and that he should want nothing that might be a relief and refreshment to his old age. But he excused himself, by alleging, that he should be more at ease in private life, than in the splendor and luxury of a palace.

And observing, he was now eighty years of age, and past the relish of court pleasure; having no other business in the world than to prepare for death, and give orders for his funeral; whereof he begged his majesty's leave to retire home, where he might live after his usual manner.

His taste was now gone, as to the relish of delicious meats and drink, the delights of singing, dancing, revels, harmonious concerts of instruments,

ments, voices, and the like. His hearing was impaired, and he had no longer any sense of these entertainments.

The king by this representation of his case, was prevailed upon to part with him; but upon condition that his son *Chimham*, went along with him, and took his part in the best offices he could do him.

Barzillai, with all dutiful acknowledgment, left his son with the king. And taking his leave with the most earnest wishes for his long and most prosperous reign, returned to his own habitation.

The king proceeded towards Gilgal, attended by the whole tribe of Judah, and one half of the nation of Israel.

On his arrival there came to him several of the chiefs of the country, accompanied by a vast multitude of people, and charged the tribe of Judah, for arrogating to themselves too much liberty, in going to the king, without consulting their brethren; whereas they ought unanimously to have gone together.

The heads of the tribe of Juda, desired the rest not to be incensed at their going before; for they esteemed it a duty incumbent on them for kindred sake so to do. They did not propose any advantage to themselves in being so forward: neither had they given any cause of offence by their expedition, to those that came after them.

The heads of the other tribes were not at all pleased with this way of reasoning; and demanding of them, "How they came to engross their king themselves? as if he were not their king likewise; that he is by God's Providence indifferently the governor of us all; so that we are eleven parts of the whole, and you but one, and consequently valuable in comparison to that proportion; you have certainly done ill in stealing away to the king by yourselves, without acquainting us."

While the great men were in hot debate about this affair, *Sheba*, the son of *Bichri*, a Benjamite (a man of a factious and turbulent spirit, stood up, and called out with a loud voice, in the middle of the croud, *Why talk they to us of a part in David? or what have we to do with the son of Jesse?*

He then caused the trumpet to be sounded, and issued a proclamation, for the people to depart to their tent, and thereupon a war was proclaimed against David.

The multitude went over to the party and interest of Sheba, except the tribe of Juda, who stood by the king, and conducted him to Jerusalem. Immediately on his arrival, he expelled from his palace, his concubines, which his son Absalom had prostituted in the sight of the people; but he had them provided for elsewhere; though he himself never more had any communication with them.

David made Amasa his general, in the place of Joab, giving him orders to assemble what troops he could of the tribe of Judah, and bring them to him in three days, that he might be ready to march out with them against the son of Bichri.

Amasa made haste to obey the royal

royal command; but finding he could not raise an army so soon as he expected, David upon the third day consulted about the affair with Joab, whom he thus addressed:

"This business of Sheba is a thing not to be trifled with; wherefore do you immediately take what forces you have at hand, with the six hundred veterans, without delay; take likewise your brother Abisha, with you, and march directly after the son of Bichri; fight him wheresoever you find him, before he draws his party into a body; and take care to prevent him from putting himself in possession of fortified cities and strong holds; for if he once gains that point, he may perhaps cost us more trouble to subdue him than Absalom did."

Joab in the same instant posted forward with his brother, and the troops that were assigned him to search for Sheba.

On his arrival at Gibeon, a village forty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, he met Amasa in his march at the head of a gallant army. Amasa advancing towards him to embrace him, Joab, with a breast-plate upon his body, and his sword girt about him, going to meet him, industriously dropped his sword out of the scabbard, and presently catched it up again, with one hand, while he took Amasa by the (*a*) beard with the other, as if it had been to have saluted him, but sheathed it in his bowels, so that he died upon the spot.

This execrable murder of a gallant youth, nearly allied to David and without provocation, certainly was the highest degree of ignominy on the character of Joab, who could be excited to it by no better motive than a malicious envy at his preferment, and a jealousy of his being too much in the king's favour.

It was much upon the same ground that he had already murdered Abner, and much after the same treacherous manner; only that in the former case, indeed, he might appear to have some specious pretence for it, in revenge of his brother Hazael; but for this second murder he had not even the shadow of excuse.

Upon the death of Amasa, Joab advanced with his army in quest of Sheba, leaving only one man with the general's body, with orders to make proclamation through the army, that he was a bad man, and treated according to his desert; desiring all those that were for the king to follow Joab, and his brother Abishai.

While the body lay exposed in the high-way, there were multitudes gathered together, gazing upon him with astonishment; so that the man who had it in charge, removed to a village, where he lodged it in a house,

(*a*) *Beard.* It was an ancient custom among the Asiatics, to take the person whom they addressed by the chin or beard, and the Turks to this day continue the same custom. The Arabians also have a great regard to the beard, the wives and children kiss the beards of their husbands and fathers when they salute them; and even when two friends meet together, they interchange kisses in the same manner. The like custom is still preserved among the Indians, who, when they would give a hearty salute, take each other by the chin, and cry, Bobba, that is Father, or Bii, Brother, as modern travellers relate.

house, and threw a cloak over it; and as soon as the surprize was over, the soldiers marched forward after their commanders.

Joab had by this time pursued Sheba almost through the land of Israel; and at last getting intelligence, that he had sheltered himself in a strong town, called *Beth Maachab*, Joab ordered the place to be immediately invested, and a trench cast about it; and, at the same time to ply it with mines and batteries: being resolved to destroy it, in resentment for the indignity offered him by the inhabitants, for shutting their gates against him.

While the army of Joab were battering the town, a good and prudent woman, out of zeal for the service of her country in that extremity, mounted the wall, and called out to Joab from the battlements, to speak a word with him out of the hearing of the soldiers.

Joab complied with her desire, and the speech she made him was to this purpose. "Whereas God has given us kings and governors to protect us against our enemies, and to maintain and preserve us in peace and unity one with another; you are come, without any injury or provocation to ruin one of the most eminent cities of the whole land of Israel.

Joab at this expressed his utter abhorence of so foul a deed; and said, he hoped God would always keep him in a better mind: adding, that he was so far from having the least thought of committing any violence on this famous city, or of doing harm to any one person in it; that if the people would but deliver up Sheba, that rebellious son of Bichri, to justice, he would at the same moment draw off his army.

Upon this promise and declaration the woman called out to Joab, to have a little patience, and Sheba's head should be thrown down to him over the wall.

Upon this, she went back to the citizens, and reasoned the matter with them in this manner; "Are you then resolved, like a company of wicked men, and for the sake of a wicked wretch, a meer stranger to you, to sacrifice your habitations, your wives, and your children? What has Sheba done for you, to balance the obligations you owe to David? Or setting aside all other arguments, are you able to defend your city against this mighty army?"

The woman's address, founded on truth and reason, carried with it such weight, that they forthwith cut off Sheba's head by consent, for a composition, and cast it over the wall. Whereupon the siege was forth-with raised; and the people returning to Jerusalem, David declared Joab general of all his troops.

Benaiah had the command given him of all the guards of the body, and the six hundred veterans, Adoram was the appointed treasurer. Jehoshaphat was recorder. Sheva secretary. Zadock and Abiathar continuing in the priesthood.

Soon after this transaction, it pleased God to afflict the Israelites with a sore famine throughout the land, and David earnestly besought God to reveal unto him in mercy, both the

the cause of that grievous judgment, and how it might be removed.

Answer was returned by the prophets, that the blood of the Gibeonites, which Saul had almost perfidiously caused to be shed, cried to heaven for vengeance, as an action not only contrary to the oath and promise of Joshua, and ratified also by the elders, but against conscience and common justice. Whereupon they demanded, that the king should give such satisfaction to the Gibeonites as they might require for the loss of their slaughtered citizens, and then the Israelites might expect that God would be gracious to them in delivering them from their present calamity.

When David came to understand this from the prophets themselves, he sent to the Gibeonites, and asked them, what satisfaction would content them?

They demanded that (*b*) seven of Saul's sons, or of his race, might be delivered up to justice.

The king ordered seven of them to be found out and put into the hands of the Gibeonites, to do with them as they pleased, but excepted Mephibosheth, for the sake of Jonathan his father.

The Gibeonites accepted of this as a composition, and hanged them all; and being thus satisfied, God sent them rain, and so kindly a continuance of it, that the earth in due time recovered its fertility, and brought forth fruits in their season, fresh and nourishing, as before.

Plenty being now restored to the afflicted land, David turned his thoughts towards the reduction of his enemies, marched out with his army against the Philistines, fought and routed them: but following the chace too far, *Ishbi-benob*, the son of *Araph*, one of the race of giants, (whose armour was a coat of mail, a lance weighing three hundred shekels, and his sword by his side) seeing David alone, and quite spent, turned short upon him, struck him

(*b*) *Seven.* The conduct of the Gibeonites, in demanding the lives of so many men, is not to be drawn into a precedent; and we shall here shew, from whence this barbarous custom of hanging up men to appease the anger of the God's proceeded; the account of it is prefaced with this observation, 2 Sam. xxi. 2. The Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel (for among them they learnt no such practice) but a remnant of the Amorites; who were addicted to this horrid superstition, of which the Gibeonites, still retained some tincture, notwithstanding their abode among people of better sentiments.

Though the scripture speaks in the dialect of these men, yet we greatly err in the conclusion from hence, if we imagine, that God can be delighted with human sacrifices, which he so frequently and vehemently expresses his detestation of.

He desires the death or punishment of no man, except it be in pursuance of his wise Providence, or when the criminal, by some bad conduct, has forfeited his life to the government he lived under; nor would he have required the execution of Saul's posterity, had it not been to procure the poor distressed Gibeonites (who were truly drudges to their Hebrew masters) a kinder treatment for the future; had it not been to testify his abhorence of all oppression and violence, and to shew that the cries of the meanest slaves, as well as the mightiest monarch, enter the ears of the most high, that with him there is no respect of persons, but that *the rich and the poor to him are both alike.*

Had it not been to repair the injury done to his most holy name, in the violation of the compact which both Joshua, and the princes of Israel made with this people, and confirmed with solemnity of an oath; in a word, had it not been by this exemplary punishment, to give mankind a lesson of instruction concerning the sacredness of oaths and treaties, and how religiously they ought to be observed, even towards those that are in the lowest circumstances of life,

to

to the earth, and had certainly slain him, if Abishai, Joab's brother, had not in the precise moment come to his relief, bestriding David, not only protected him, but killed his enemy.

The whole army, sensible of the danger, the king was in, and of the Providence of his deliverance, that the commanders bound him by an oath never to hazard his royal person any more in a battle; being naturally brave, he laid himself too open to the common chance of war; and if he should miscarry, it would be an irreparable loss to the nation, to be deprived of the blessings they enjoyed under his mild and gentle administration.

Soon after this engagement however the Philistines rallied their forces, and fixed their place of rendezvous at Gob, which David having notice of, dispatched an army immediately against them.

In this expedition, Shibbechai the Hushathite, one of the bravest men in the whole body, acquired great reputation by cutting off several of the race of giants, (men of prodigious bulk and strength) with his own hand. He had in short, the honour of a great share in that day's success.

The Philistines after this, brought another army into the field, and the king sent out his troops to encounter them. In this encounter, Elhanan, who was allied to the king, signalized his valour, by slaying in a single combat, one of the boldest men the Philistines had in their party; the rest turned their backs upon it, and lost great numbers in the engagement.

Notwithstanding this, they in a short time recruited yet once again, and encamped at a certain town, not far from the borders of the Israelites. The Philistines had in their camp a man six cubits high; six fingers on a hand, and six toes on each foot, and one that valued himself upon his descent, from the stock of giants.

Jonathan the son of Shimei, had the honour to kill this gigantic man, in single combat, and at the head of his troops, which contributed very much to the success of the day; and acquired him the glorious character of a valiant man.

This was the last battle the Israelites had with the Philistines: for from that time forward, they never had courage to make head against them.

King David having now entirely vanquished his most inveterate and powerful enemies, and obtained for his people a profound, undisturbed peace, devoted himself to the service of God, and composed divers psalms and hymns to different tunes, in order to celebrate the praises of that God who had so often wrought salvation for his chosen people.

These compositions he ordered to be sung by the Levites, on the sabbaths and other festivals, in concert with musical instruments, provided for that purpose. As they had an instrument with ten sirings, to be touched with a quill, the psaltery with twelve strings, to be played upon with the fingers; and large cymbals of brass.

The sacred historian, having recorded several of the hymns com-

posed by the royal psalmist, and having mentioned, that the king had about him eight and thirty worthies, or men renowned for their valour and probity, we shall particularly select for minute observation, the names, characters, and remarkable achievements of five of them, by which judgment may be formed of the rest.

The first was *Adino*, the Eznite, who broke several times into the body of the enemy, and killed eight hundred of them in one encounter, with his own hand.

The second was *Eleazer*, the son of *Dodo*, who was with the king in Arasam.

It was his fortune to be in a battle, where the Israelites finding themselves mightily over-powered with numbers, gave way and fled, leaving him alone, to make good his ground. This he did so effectually, that he gave a stand to the whole army, killing and wounding great numbers; so that his sword was, in a manner, fixed to his right hand with the blood.

His great example of bravery encouraged the fugitives, and made them rally, and charge the enemy with such fury, that they recovered the day, and crowned it with a wonderful and most illustrious victory; Eleazer killing them, and the common soldiers stripping them.

The third was, *Shammah*, the son of *Agee*, who upon another engagement with the Philistines, finding the Israelites giving way, opposed his single body to the whole force of the enemy; did great execution upon them; broke their order; put them to flight, and pursued them with a great overthrow.

In these three instances we read the bravery of these three heroical adventurers, in the plain field, and in the face of an enemy.

At another time, when the king was at Jerusalem, and the Philistines encamped before it, in the great valley that extends as far as Bethlehem, about twenty furlongs from the town, David went up to a high tower to ask counsel and direction of God, about the government and event of the war. And speaking to his friends of the delicious water that was in his country, and especially of the well at Bethlehem, that was next the gate, *What would I give, with earneſt deſire, exclaimed he, for a draught of that water!*

These three men over hearing him, went their way immediately, broke through the camp of the enemy, fetched some water from the well, and came back with it the same way they went. The Barbarians standing amazed all the while at the hardiness of the undertaking, and not daring, though so few in number, to interrupt them in their return.

Upon their presenting of this water to the king, he gave God thanks for the safety of them that brought it; but it would not become him to drink it, for, he said, It was the price of blood, and so he poured it upon the ground, as an offering to the Lord.

The fourth was *Abiſhai*, the brother of *Joab*, that in one day slew three hundred of the enemy.

The

The fifth, and the last of these worthy champions we shall mention was, *Benaiah*, a man of a sacerdotal family, who fought upon a challenge, with two brothers, of eminent fame for feats of arms among the Moabites, and killed them both.

He fought again with an Egyptian of monstrous force and size; and closing with him, threw himself naked, and his adversary armed at all points, forced his spear out of his hands, dispatched him with his own weapon; and for his greater honour, disarmed him while he was yet living.

He performed another feat of valour, equal, if not superior, to the rest. There was a lion dropped into a pitfall; the snow drove in, and covered the mouth of it; so that the beast finding no way to get out again, roared most hideously. Beniah happening to pass that way, hearing of this outcry, went to the place and with a staff killed the lion.

These were five great men; and the other three and thirty not inferior to them.

David now determined to number the people of all the tribes of Israel, not remembering the old precept of the great law-giver Moses, that as often as it should be found requisite to muster the people, an oblation should be offered unto the Lord of a shekel a head. But sent Joab abruptly to take a general account.

Joab excused himself from it as a thing that was needless; but David would not admit of the excuse, and therefore positively commanded him to go about it immediately.

In obedience therefore to the king's solemn injunction, he summoned the scribes and the heads of the people to advise with them, and went through the whole land of Israel, to make the computation.

After nine months and twenty days, Joab returned to Jerusalem, and told the king upon the whole, that besides the tribe of Benjamin, and of Levi, which he had not as yet taken an account of, he found the number of the rest of the Israelites to amount to eight hundred thousand men, who were able to bear arms. In the tribe of Judah alone having reckoned five hundred thousand.

When Joab was absent on this business, David was informed by the Prophet, that the anger of the Lord was kindled against him for his rash conduct, and not complying with the precepts delivered down by his servant Moses. Whereupon he betook himself to true repentance begged pardon of Almighty God, with prayer and supplications, and obtained it.

After this, God sent the Prophet Gad to him, with an offer of three things for his choice; that is, either a seven years famine, three months flight before an enemy, or three days pestilence; and to demand an immediate answer from him, which of the three he would take?

David found himself in a great streight which to chuse, thus arguing with himself. If I chuse the famine, it would look as if I had more

concern

concern for myself than for my people; for my store-houses are much better provided with corn than theirs. If to lie at the mercy of an enemy, it appears the same still; for I have strong holds and castles to repair to for my own safety. But the third is a calamity that threatens governors in common with their subjects.

As he was thus deliberating, the Prophet pressed him to an immediate answer; to which he made this return. "That he would rather fall into the hands of God than of man; and therefore submitting himself to God's pleasure and goodness, he chose the pestilence.

The Prophet had no sooner received, and reported David's answer, than the Israelites were seized with a most unaccountable distemper, that was attended with certain death, and accompanied with accidents that baffled all the physicians, either to find the cause or remedy. So that in fine they died in prodigious numbers. Some went off with gripes, and torments that dispatched them in a trice; some with faintness and languors, in despite of the physicians; others with giddiness, dimness of sight, suffocations, &c.

Some again expired themselves, before they could thoroughly perform the office of the burial for their dead friends.

The mortality, in short, was so great, that betwixt break of day and dinner-time, there were swept away by this pestilence, seventy thousand persons.

The destroying Angel was now going to Jerusalem upon the same commission; but the king putting on sackcloth, and humbly supplicating God with prayers and tears, to remove this dreadful judgment; in the middle of his ejaculations, he lifted up his eyes, and discovered an Angel, with a drawn sword, moving toward Jerusalem.

Upon this apparition he broke out into a more passionate exclamation, Lord, *says he*, punish the shepherd; but alas! what have these sheep done? Pour down thy wrath rather upon me and my father; but spare the innocent people, I beseech thee."

The earnest supplications of the pious and patriot king, reached the throne of grace, and God immediately put a stop to the pestilence; ordering the king, by the mouth of the Prophet Gad, to go up without delay to the threshing-floor of *Araunah*, and there to erect an altar, and to offer sacrifice upon it.

David went away to the place, according to his direction, where he found Araunah threshing his corn, who no sooner saw David and his sons coming towards him, than he ran out with reverence to them.

Now this Araunah was a Jebusite and so particular a friend of David's that he protected and secured him from all damage upon the very taking of the city, as had been before observed.

At the king's approach, he thus humbly addressed him, "Is there any thing now that my Lord will be pleased to command of his servant?

I come, said David, to buy your threshing-floor, and to raise an altar to God upon it, and to offer sacrifice.

Nay,

Nay, replied, Araunah, not only my threshing-floor, but my ploughs, my oxen, and burnt-offerings, are all at my Lord's service. And I beseech that God to look graciously down upon your worship and sacrifice."

The king was exceedingly pleased with the generosity and greatness of this good man's mind; but told him, that it must be a purchase, not a gift; for it would not be acceptable, to offer a sacrifice that should cost him nothing. So Araunah committed himself to David, who gave him fifty shekels for the floor; offered sacrifices and burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings upon it. After which solemnity, David was reinstated in God's grace and favour.

This was the place whither Abraham brought his son Isaac to, when he was commanded to offer him for a sacrifice. David's grateful remembrance of the favour of God in averting the heavy judgment at his intercession, and afterwards accepting the oblations he offered, came to a resolution to call the whole place by the name of the people's altar, or the Israelite's altar, and to build a temple there; which purpose was afterward ratified by God himself, who sent his Prophet to him with a prediction, that his successor should there build a temple.

David employed people upon this, to take an account how many strangers he had in his dominions, who were reckoned to amount to about one hundred and eighty thousand persons.

Out of these he chose eighty thousand to work in stone; the rest to be employed in carrying all sorts of materials; appointing thirty-five thousand to oversee the workmen.

There was provided for the people a prodigious quantity of brass, iron, and cedar wood in abundance was brought from Tyre and Sydon. Though David told his familiar friends, that these materials were only to lie ready for use, when his son should have occasion for them, which would save time and trouble, and expedite the work; but that as yet, his son was too young and unexperienced to manage and direct so arduous an undertaking.

CHAP. II.

DAVID DELIVERS TO HIS SON SOLOMON SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS, CONCERNING THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE, TO BE DEVOTED TO GOD'S IMMEDIATE HONOUR, WORSHIP AND SERVICE. ADONIJAH, DAVID'S FOURTH SON, ON HIS GROWING INFIRM, CLAIMS THE GOVERNMENT BY SUCCESSION; BUT RELINQUISHES THE SAME UPON THE OPPOSITION OF THE PEOPLE. SOLOMON PROCLAIMED KING. DAVID'S TRANSACTIONS A SHORT TIME BEFORE HIS DEATH, VIZ. HIS SPEECH TO THE PEOPLE, AND ADVICE TO HIS SON CONCERNING THE WORK HE HAD LEFT HIM TO ACCOMPLISH; AND THE FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF AFFAIRS, HIS DEATH AND SKETCH OF CHARACTER.

SUCH was the state and condition of the Israelites, when David called his son *Solomon* to him, and

gave him special charge, that as soon as he came to the throne, he should enter upon the building of a temple, for the honour and worship of God: the charge ran in terms to this effect.

"I would have done it myself; but being frequently engaged in war, and consequently a man of blood, I was forbidden by an express command from Heaven, and the work reserved by Providence for my youngest son.

This son, according to the prediction was to be called Solomon, who should be a prince of peace; of whom it was foretold, that God would take him with a paternal affection into his care, and that the whole people of Israel should be happy under his administration; and enjoy not only a peace (the greatest of all temporal blessings) with foreigners, but live free from any evil or intestine divisions among themselves.

Now, continued David, since you were designed to be a king, even before you were born, do you endeavour to behave yourself as a man otherwise worthy of that honour conferred on you by Providence; govern yourself according to the measure of piety, justice, and true fortitude; pay a reverence to the precepts, laws, and traditions of Moses; observe them religiously yourself: nor do not suffer any violation of them in others.

As for the temple that God hath appointed to be built in your reign, be sure to attend it as you ought to do, and let not the difficulty of the work discourage you; for it shall be my care to have all the materials in readiness for you to begin withal, upon your first entrance upon the government of Israel.

I have provided ten thousand talents of silver, brass and iron to an immense quantity, besides timber and stone, in vast abundance.

You shall have also many thousands of carpenters and masons, and the means of supplying yourself with what you want.

Attend your business with care and dispatch; for upon the finishing of this undertaking, you may assure yourself of the perpetual favour and protection of Almighty God.

Having delivered this charge to his son; David enjoined the principal men of the several tribes to concur with Solomon, in the pious design of rearing an edifice to perpetuate the glories of the God of Israel, and without being solicitous upon any other account, to attend the business of religion in the first place; for that alone would be sufficient to secure the peace and welfare of the commonwealth, which are the neverfailing rewards of righteousness and justice.

He appointed also, that upon the finishing of the temple, the ark should be placed in it, with all the holy vessels and utensils thereunto belonging, which he told them should have been there deposited long before, if their forefathers had observed the injunction God laid upon them, of raising a temple to him immediately upon their coming into the land of promise.

These counsels and exhortations of David were addressed indifferently, both to his son and to the princes.

Though

Though David was not yet arrived to an age that was deemed an advanced one in those days of longevity, (being now about seventy years old;) yet his constitution was greatly impaired by the hardships he had undergone, both in escaping the indignation of Saul, and in numberless campaigns; insomuch that his blood was so chilled, that all the coverings and blankets they could throw over him would not procure him any heat; so that a counsel of physicians was called, and they unanimously agreed, that the best thing for a man under such circumstances, was a fair and young (*c*) bed-fellow; as the warmth being gentle and kindly, would relieve nature without force. They found out upon this, in the city, a very beautiful woman that came up exactly to their prescription, and put her to bed to him. Her name was *Abiſhag*, and her business only to lie by him, and comfort him; which she might safely and innocently do, the king being now past the temptations of all irregular dispositions.

David had a fourth son, whose name was *Adonijah*, born to him by Haggith, and the next after Absalom, in point of beauty, stature, and gracefulness of person; nay, and in his ambition too, he was not far behind him.

This Adonijah (Absalom being dead) laid claim to the government, as the next in succession, and obtaining many friends by interest and popularity to assist him, toward the gaining of his point. He furnished himself with a pompous equipage of chariots, horses, guards and the like; while his father innocently suffered him to go on, without the least check or caution; nay, or so much as asking him the design of this mighty preparation.

His chief accomplices were Joab the general, and Abiathar the high-priest; but Zadock the high priest, and the prophet Nathan, Benaiah the captain of the guards, Shimei the king's friends, and the generality of the soldiery, were in a different interest, and opposed his measures.

To strengthen his interest, and promote his ambitious design, Adonijah prepared a mighty treat in the suburbs of Jerusalem, near the fountain in the king's gardens.

To this entertainment he invited all his brothers, save only Solomon, and there was Joab also, and Abiathar, and the chiefs of the tribe of Judah; but neither Zadock, Nathan, Benaiah, nor any others of that interest were invited.

The prophet Nathan took notice of this to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, in these words. "Look ye; here is Adonijah setting himself up for king, and David knows nothing of what's done: wherefore let

(*c*) It is the obſervation of *Galen*, that nothing ſo effectually procures heat and health, as the application of any thing young to the ſtomach; the advice therefore, of David's phyſicians was phyſically good; but it had been ſinful, and ſuch as he could not have followed, had not this young woman been taken as his concubinary wife.

Such cuſtoms have taken place in the eaſtern nations, from the moſt early period of time, and although they are not allowed among chriſtians, yet under the Jewiſh thocraſy they were juſtifiable.

it be your care, as well for your son's sake, as for your own, to look after this affair.

Go you to David, and when you have him alone, remind him of his oath that Solomon should reign after him; and yet Adonijah is as good as upon the throne already.

While you are discoursing this matter with the king, I may come into the chamber to you, and second your information."

Bathsheba followed the prophet's advice, went in to the king, where she made her reverence; and after leave given her to deliver what she had to say, she gave David an account of the affair in the very words the prophet had dictated to her, telling him moreover the circumstances of Adonijah's entertainment; whom he had invited, and whom he had left out. Also, that the people were in a suspense what to do, till he should declare his successor, and that her own life, and her son's, were both at stake upon the issue.

While Bathsheba was relating these things, the king's servants brought word, that the prophet Nathan was at the door to wait upon him. He was immediately called in, and upon the very instant of entering the royal presence, he asked David in some confusion, "Whether or no he that day transferred his government to Adonijah, and declared him his successor? He has made a very splendid feast, invited such and such persons to it; omitted such and such others, and now are they eating drinking, and making merry, with healths and acclamations to the honour of their new king Adonijah: but that neither himself, Zadock the high-priest, and Benaiah the captain of the guards, were invited.

Now, it would be well, added the Prophet, to let the world understand whether this be done with your knowledge and approbation, or not."

Bathsheba, who withdrew when the Prophet came in, was now, by the king's order, called for back again. She was accordingly brought to David, and he addressed her in this manner. "The thing that I have sworn formerly, I do now swear over again, in the presence of the great God. Your son Solomon shall reign after me, and sit upon my throne; and you shall see it done this very day.

Upon which declaration and assurance, she submissively took her leave, wishing the king a long and prosperous life.

The king thus warned by the prophet Nathan, immediately determined to put into execution his resolution concerning the elevation of his son Solomon to the throne of Israel, after his decease, the abolishing the claim of Adonijah, he sent for Zadock and Benaiah, and bade them take the prophet Nathan, and the royal guards with them; mount Solomon upon the king's mule, carry him out of the city to the fountain, that is called Gihon, there anoint him with holy oil, and proclaim him king.

This office being assigned to the High-Priest and the Prophet, command was farther given, that they should conduct him through the heart of the city with trumpets sounding before him, and a multitude

of

of troops following with shouts and rejoicings, crying, *Long live king Solomon!* to the end, that the whole nation might be apprised, that his father had declared him his successor.

David, on this solemn occasion, laid on his son the strict charge to govern not only the tribe of Judah, but the whole nation of the Israelites, according to the strictest rules and measures of piety and justice.

Benaiah, after this, with an affectionate ejaculation for God's blessing upon Solomon, and the whole proceeding, went instantly away with the rest of the company, according to their order, to execute the office assigned them.

They mounted Solomon upon the king's mule; conducted him out of the city to the fountain; anointed him with holy oil, and then brought him back again, attended with the acclamations, and the unanimous wishes of the people for his long and happy reign. They brought him afterwards to the palace, and placed him upon his father's throne.

This solemnity being over, the people devoted themselves to jollity, feasting, musick, dancing, and all other cheerful diversions, to such a degree of transport and rejoicings, that the clamour of their extravagant joy coming to the ears of Adonijah and his guests, it did not a little surprize them; Joab himself declaring, that the noise he heard of shouts and trumpets did not at all please him; indeed, it gave such a damp to their jollity, and disrelish to their entertainment, that none of them had any appetite to enjoy what was before them.

While they where in this melancholy posture, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the High-Priest, came running to them in great haste, and Adonijah, not apprehending the doleful purport of his message, but rather that he brought good news, received him cheerfully.

When Jonathan gave them the whole relation of the king's orders, and the proceeding concerning Solomon; they had no sooner heard the melancholy circumstance, than every man slinked away from the banquet, to his own home.

Adonijah indeed, conscious to himself of an indignity, too great to be forgiven, fled for sanctuary to the horns (*d*) of the altar, and there begged for pardon.

When Solomon came to understand the fate of Adonijah, and that he insisted upon some security to be given him for an indemnity from punishment, with as much prudence as clemency, he granted him a pardon

(*d*) *Horns of the Altar.* There is no precept in the Jewish law by which the Altar is made a sanctuary, nor is their any forbidding it, yet in conformity to the customs of other nations, the Jews seem to have done it; for that other nations used the same custom, appears from that passage in Virgil:

Talibus orabat dictis arasque tenebat.

'Twas thus he pray'd, and thus the Altars held.

And it seems not unlikely, that as the people, when they came into the land of Canaan, had cities appointed by God, whereunto the manslayer might flee; so while they continued in the wilderness, the camp of the Levites, might serve for the same purpose; and from the words in Exodus xxi. 14. where God ordered the wilful murderer to be taken from the Altar, that he may die, it seems unquestionably true, that even in the land of Canaan, the Altar continued a sanctuary for those who fled to it.

for what was past; but with a precaution, to beware how he behaved himself for the future; for if he should be found in any such practice again, his destruction should lie at his own door.

Whereupon Solomon ordered him to be brought to him from his place of refuge; and when he had paid his duty and reverence to the new king, he bade him go to his own house again in peace, and to behave himself for the time to come like a good man, as he respected his own interest and welfare.

David, esteeming it necessary for the future peace and tranquility of the kingdom, that Solomon should be proclaimed and recognized king of the whole nation of Israel; to effect which he summoned all the princes to Jerusalem, together with the priests and Levites; and found upon the roll thirty eight thousand men among them, that were above thirty years of age; out of which number there were twenty thousand to attend the building of the temple; judges and their clerks six thousand; four thousand porters belonging to the house of God, and as many singers and musicians, of which we have already hinted, he divided into families; and upon separating the priests from the rest of the tribe, he found twenty-four of them; that is, sixteen descended from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar; appointing every family to officiate eight days, as from sabbath to sabbath, and so to proceed in regular succession.

The lots of the whole were cast in the presence of David, and of the High-Priests, Zadock and Abiathar, together with the heads of the tribes.

The lot that came out first, being entered upon the roll (the first family) and to the second, and the third, &c. to the twenty-fourth, in order as it happened, which way of distribution continues in use to this day.

He divided the tribe of Levi also in twenty-four parts, to succeed one after another, according to the chance of the lot: in the same manner with the priests: but the preference was still given to the posterity of Moses, to whom were committed the custody of the holy treasure, and the disposal of the bounties and donations of princes, and royal benefactors.

He likewise ordered the whole tribe of Levi, and the priests, to attend the service of God, day and night in their turns, according to the primitive institution of Moses.

Having thus judiciously divided the tribes, and appointed the manner in which they should respectively succeed, to the sacred functions of the temple; he proceeded to the arrangement of his whole army into twelve divisions, with their commanders in chief, inferior officers, and their subordinates; every division to consist of twenty-four thousand men, and each of those divisions to do a month's duty to their respective courses, upon the guard of Solomon's palace, together with their respective commanders; every part to have its distinct officer or judge; and ordained that he should be a man of approved integrity.

He appointed also overseers of the king's

king's income, vineyards, lands, husbandry, flocks, and herds, &c. whom it would be too tedious here to recount.

When the king had brought things to this wise conclusion, he called a general assembly of the Hebrew magistrates, the princes of the tribes, the officers of the army, and the managers of the revenue, and then raising himself upon an eminence, spoke to the people from his throne to the following effect;

"I am now to give you to understand, my countrymen and brethren, that I have had it a long time in my thought to erect a temple to the Lord, and I treasured up a great quantity of gold, and a hundred thousand talents of silver toward the charge of the undertaking; but it hath pleased God in his providence, by the mouth of the prophet Nathan, to put a stop to my design, upon this consideration, that he would not have the foundation of his holy house laid by hands that had been dipped in blood, which mine have inevitably been, though in the blood of your enemies, by reason of the wars I have been forced into, in the righteous and necessary defence and vindication of your liberties. But the prophet told me further, that God would transmit the care of it to my son and successor, both to begin and finish the work. You know that our father Jacob had twelve sons; and that Judah was yet chosen by common consent to be ruler of all the rest.

You know likewise, that I myself, though there were six brothers of us, was advanced by God to the government, and that none of the rest thought themselves injured; wherefore I must now require in like manner of you, and of all my sons, that you submit cheerfully and dutifully to my son Solomon; and that you do it without any murmuring, faction, or civil dissension; for it is from God's immediate command and commission that he derives his authority. If that God should have set even a stranger over you, how great a folly and wickedness it would have been for you to murmur at it? but how thankful ought you now to be for the choice of so near a relation, when you yourselves are partakers of the honour that is done to your brother. There is nothing I so much long for, as to see God's gracious promises take a speedy effect; and the whole people without any more delay put into a full and lasting possession of the blessings they are to enjoy under the reign of Solomon. All this *(addressing himself to Solomon)* my dear son will be made good, and every thing succeed to your wish, so long as you govern according to piety and justice, with a respect to your duty both to God and man, upholding in the steps of your forefathers; but whenever you transgress these bounds, there is nothing but misery and ruin to be expected as the consequence.

When David had finished his excellent counsel, both to his people and son, concerning the reciprocal duties they owed each other, in the presence of a mighty concourse, he delivered to the latter a draught of the form and model of the temple, from top to bottom, such as the foundation and superstructure; the height and

and breadth of the fabrick; the private cells, their number and dimensions; what vessels of gold and silver were to be provided, with directions for their precise weight.

He also exhorted him at the same time, to carry on the work with diligence, and finish the buildings in a proper manner, likewise pressing the princes and the tribes of Levi to contribute their assistance; not only in regard to his youth, and want of experience, but out of a reverence to his divine commission, which both entitled him to the government, and authorized and predetermined him to this province.

And, as a farther encouragement, observed, that it would not be a work of any great difficulty (for the materials were provided to their hand), so many talents of gold, more of silver, stone and timber; carpenters, stonecutters, and other workmen; a great treasure in emeralds, and other precious stones, over and above; beside a further supply of (*c*) three thousand talents of the purest gold, out of his own treasury, for the adorning of the Holy Place, and the chariot of God, and the cherubims that were to cover the ark.

The assembly pleased with the pious and spirited address of the king, unanimously concurred, both princes, people and Levites in their respective promotion of the arduous undertaking, and proposed very large contributions.

They offered among them to bring in (*f*) five thousand talents of gold, a hundred thousand of silver, ten thousand shekels, and an immense mass of iron. They had precious stones, brought them into the treasury, where they were deposited in the custody of one Jalus, of the race of Moses.

The people were infinitely pleased upon the whole, and David above all the rest, to see such an universal agreement and willingness, both in princes, priests, and people, towards carrying on the work; for which he blessed God with a loud voice, in the stile of *Father, and Creator of heaven and earth; the governor and protector of the Israelites, and the blessed fountain of happiness to the people committed to his charge.*

He concluded his devotions with a fervent prayer for the comfort and happiness of the nation; and with particular wishes of peace of conscience, and the blessing of an unspotted innocence and integrity on his son.

He then called upon the people to join with him in thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies; upon which they fell upon their faces, and worshipped; and coming afterwards to David, made their acknowledgements for all the benefits and advan-

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The day following was a great day of sacrifices; a thousand calves, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs for a burnt-offering; and afterwards, many thousand victims more for peace-offerings. It was a day dedicated to feasting, both by the king and people.

Solomon was now a second time anointed, declared and recognized by the people, for their lawful king, and Zadock, by the voice of the whole multitude, appointed their High-Priest.

Thus generally acknowledged by the common voice, Solomon was conducted to the place, and placed upon his father's throne; from which day forward, the people paid him true and faithful allegiance as king over Israel.

Good king David, finding himself decline daily, and perceiving that his dissolution approached, sent for his son Solomon, in order to bestow on him his last advice, and take his final leave.

When he approached his venerable father: he addressed him in this pious and pathetic strain, *Son I am going to my fathers; and you that I leave behind me, are in due time to come to me; which is no more than the paying of the common debt to nature. There is no returning from the grave, and when we are gone, we have done with this world for ever. Wherefore while I am yet among the living, and before it be too late, let me remind you of the same thing once again, that I have so often inculcated on you heretofore.*

Govern your subjects according to justice. Worship that God from whom you have received your dignity as well as your being, as you are bound to do.

Observe his precepts, and keep his laws, as they have been handed down to you from Moses; and take care, that you never forsake them, neither for fear, flattery, or any other passion or interest whatsoever. For otherwise, you can never pretend to hope for the blessings of God's favour and Providence.

But if you behave yourself with reverence and submission towards God, as you ought to do, and as I wish you may do, your kingdom will be established to yourself, and the succession of it continued in your family, from generation to generation.

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Joab did many valourous and brave acts for the honour of his king, and the enlargement of his dominions, but then he sullies the whole, by his barbarous murders, and insolent behaviour.

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They both of them had committed crimes enough to forfeit their lives; but David thinking it not adviseable, for reasons of state, to seize either of them at present, but directs his son, if ever they give him a sufficient provocation, not to spare them; and in so doing, he is not to be consi-

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the ſon of Jether, two great captains, and worthy men; and all this purely out of malice and envy. You may do by him as you think fit.

The truth of it is, I had puniſhed him myſelf, but that he was ſo popular I durſt not meddle with him.

As for the ſons of Barzillai the Gileadite, I muſt deſire you for my ſake to be very kind to them, and to do them all the good offices you can: not as an obligation, but in requital of the generous friendſhips I receiv-ed from their father in the time of my baniſhment, which I reckoned as a debt incumbent upon our whole fa-mily.

As for the ſon of Gera, Shemei the Benjamite that hunted me with ſuch bitter curſing and reviling in the days of my perſecution at Mahanaim, and afterwards meeting me at the ri-ver Jordan, obtained my pardon for it; you may take ſome warrantable occaſion to requite him yet for that affront.

Having thus delivered his senti-ments and counsel to his son, both concerning his duty towards God; the administration of justice, the requiting of his friends, and the pu-nishing of his enemies, David gave up the ghost, in about the 70th year of his age, after he had reigned se-ven years and six months over the tribe of Judah at Hebron, and thirty-three years more over all Israel and Jerusalem.

He was a man of great goodness, and endued with all the royal ex-cellencies that could qualify a prince for the discharge of so great a trust. He was valiant, and often signalized his courage, both in single combat and general rencounters, exposing his person to the most imminent ha-zard in the defence of his people. He swayed his soldiers by his exam-ple, rather than by the rigour of his discipline.

He was judicious in the choice of his councils; of a singular presence of mind; of sharp foresight in the improving all advantages, and the obviating of foreseen difficulties.

To this he was temperate and so-ber, affable to all, tender towards the distressed righteous, and humane to all.

He was a prince that never made an ill use of his power, saving only in the case of the wife of Uriah.

He left a treasure to his successor greater than ever any other prince whatsoever left before him.

He was (*b*) buried at Jerusalem, with

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dered as a private man, acting upon the principles of re-sentment, but as a king and governor, giving advice to his son and successor in affairs of state.

It was for the public good that such offenders as Joab and Shemei should suffer at a proper time, and as Provi-dence should direct; and therefore, since his promise and oath to the one of them, and the formidable power and in-terest of the other, had restrained them in his life-time, from punishing them as they deserved; and since it would have been unjust in itself, and derogatory to the glory of his son's reign, to suffer such notorious crimes to go unpuni-shed; he recommended to his son the consideration of these things, and like a wise magistrate, laid a scheme for the punishment of wickedness, without regard to any pri-vate revenge.

(*b*) *Buried at Jeruſalem.* It is somewhat very unac-countable, that the particular place of this prince's sepul-chre, which both the Chaldeans and the Romans, at their sacking of Jerusalem, thought proper to spare, should now be so entirely lost that we cannot find the least remains of it;

with all the solemnity of royal pomp and magnificence; and to add to the splendor of the ceremony, his son Solomon deposited in his monument an estimable treasure.

CHAP. III.

SOLOMON'S GLORIOUS ACCESSION TO THE THRONE OF ISRAEL. CAUSES ADONIJAH, JOAB, AND SHIMEI, TO BE PUT TO DEATH, AND ABIATHAR TO BE DEPOSED FROM THE PRIESTHOOD, FOR THEIR JOINT CONCURRENCE, IN ENDEAVOURING TO OBTAIN THE CROWN FOR HIS ELDER BROTHER. MARRIES THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF EGYPT. GIVES EVIDENT TOKENS OF HIS SUPERIOR WISDOM AND POWER IN DIVERS ACTS OF IMPORTANCE. BUT IS AT LENGTH SHAMEFULLY DRAWN INTO IDOLATRY BY THE INORDINATE LOVE OF WOMEN.

DAVID that eminent king of Israel, and servant of the most high God, having done honour to his crown by the signal services he performed for his country, left behind him a remarkable instance of singular piety towards God, and benevolence towards mankind, was at length wafted through the gloomy passage of death to that world of spirits, where bliss uninterrupted reigns for ever, and immortal minds are rendered compleatly happy, by a total deprivation of those passions which agitate the flesh, and are the inseparable companions of mortality.

Solomon his son ascended the throne of Israel, by the decree of an over-ruling Providence, and the special appointment of his deceased king and father, and with the universal acclamation of the people.

But Adonijah, who had made an attempt upon the government, during the life of his father, applied himself in an artful address to Bathsheba, the king's mother. She received him with great courtesy, and with large assurances of her assistance in any thing that might be in her power.

Upon this encouragement he came presently to his point, and thus bespoke her. *Great princeſs, I need not tell you, that if I were diſpoſed to be troubleſome upon the turn of government, the right of priory, and the good-will of the people would be*

it: the Book of Psalms, however, are an eternal monument of his most excellent genius, and redound more to his glory than the most pompous elegies; and the following epitaph, which the author of the Ecclesiasticus has consecrated to his memory, will remain when brass and marble shall be no more.

"As the fat is taken away from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the people of Israel. He played with young lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs; he slew a giant when he was young, and took away reproach from his people; for he called upon the most high Lord, and he gave strength to his right hand to slay the mighty warrior, and to set up the horn of his people. So the people honoured him with ten thousands, and praised him in blessings of the Lord; for he destroyed the enemies on every side, and brought to nought the Philistines, his adversaries; in all his works he praised the holy One most high, and blessed the Lord with words of glory; he set singers also before the altar, that by their voices, they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set their solemn times in perfect order: the Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever; he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel. Eccles. xlvii. 2. &c.

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on my ſide; but ſince it hath pleaſed God to devolve it upon your ſon Solomon, I am the king's humble ſervant, and ſhall content myſelf with the bounds of my preſent condition.

I have only one thing to beg of you, which is, that you will be pleaſed to uſe your intereſt with your ſon, on my behalf, that I may be permitted to take Abiſhag to wife.

She lay by my father David's ſide only to keep him warm in his extreme decay of heat, and undoubtedly he left her a virgin as he found her.

Bathsheba promised him the uttermost in her power, and encouraged him to hope for success; for Solomon she doubted not, would most readily agree to the joint request of his brother, and his mother, in a greater matter than this appeared to be.

This was a pleasing promise to Adonijah from Bathsheba, who went directly to her son, to confer with him upon the matter.

Solomon rose up to meet his mother, and taking her in his arms, conducted her to his bed-chamber, where he placed her on his right-hand upon a chair of state. Bathsheba was no sooner seated, but she presently entered upon her business, and thus addressed the king. *Son, I have an humble ſuit to lay before you, and it would trouble me not a little, if you ſhould refuſe it.*

The king inquired the substance of it with apparent surprize, as if there were any thing for her to ask, which a dutiful child could deny to his mother. He therefore intreated her to go on, and to depend upon his readiness to comply with her desire in any thing he could do.

Thus encouraged she proceeded, *Son, I make it my requeſt, that you will give Abiſhag in marriage to your brother Adonijah.*

The king started at this proposal in a surprize, and dismissed his mother with these words. *Adonijah has more ambitious deſigns in his head than the marrying of Abiſhag. Why does he not ſpeak plain rather, and put in his claim to the kingdom, as elder brother; which he might as honeſtly have done, and with the ſame trouble.*

Firſt, He deſires Abiſhag in marriage; and then he has procured great friends and intereſt to ſupport his pretenſions. Such as Joab the general, Abiathar the high prieſt, and others.

Solomon deliberating upon the present state of things, (*c*) sent *Benaiah*, the captain of the guard, with a commission forthwith to kill his brother; and then calling for Abiathar, the high-priest, he told him, that though he had deserved to die, yet in regard of the services he had done his father, and of the part he bore in bringing back the ark, his punishment should be only banishment. *Therefore*, says he, *Be gone*

(*c*) *Sent Benaiah.* It was formerly very customary among princes, to employ their officers, or greatest confidents, in such like executions. In *Dan.* ii. 24. we read, that *Nebuchadnezzar ſent Arioh, who was chief commander of his troops, to deſtroy the wiſe men of Babylon*, because they could not interpret his dream; and therefore we need the less wonder, that we find Solomon employing Benjamin, captain of his guard, in the like office as is still the practice in Asia.

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immediately from this place, and let mine eyes never see you more. Betake yourself to your own home; fix your habitation in the country, and there continue to the day of your death.

You have been false to me in joining with Adonijah, and for that fault, this is your sentence. You have made yourself unworthy of the honour of the priesthood, and from this time forward you shall exercise the function no more.

Abiathar thus dismissed from the sacerdotal office, that dignity devolved from the house of Ithamar (as God had foretold to Eli, the grandfather of Abiathar) into the family of Phineas, being conferred on Zadock.

When Joab heard of the death of Adonijah, conscious of having cultivated his friendship, and studied his interest more than the king's, he had just ground to expect the resentment of Solomon, to evade which he fled for sanctuary to the altar; not doubting but that the veneration the king had for God, and for holy things, would be a protection to him.

When the king came to understand that Joab had taken sanctuary, he sent Benaiah to cite him to a court of justice, to answer for what he had done: but he refused to quit the altar, declaring, that if he must perish, he would rather die there than in any other place.

Benaiah carried his answer to the king, who immediately ordered him to cut off his head where he was, and as a just punishment upon him for the detestable murders of Abner and Amasa, against all the ties of honour, humanity and justice, but gave it in charge to Benaiah, to see his body buried, for a memorial to posterity of so execrable a wickedness, and likewise to acquit both himself and father, of any rigour in the death of Joab.

Benaiah upon the execution of this commission, was made general in Joab's place; and upon the deposing of Abiathar the high-priest, the king assigned Zadock to succeed him.

Nor did Shimei escape his just resentment, for the king commanded him to build himself a house at Jerusalem, and not to stir out of it, or to pass the river Kidron upon the peril of his life; nay, he confirmed the solemn sentence with exacting an oath from Shimei, who, well satisfied with the conditions, swore to the observance of them. Hereupon, he quitted his own country, and came and dwelt at Jerusalem.

About three years after, it happened, that two of Shimei's servants, ran away from him; and the master hearing that they were at Gath (*d*)

(*d*) *Gath.* These servants were probably such as he had purchased with a considerable sum of money, and their running away was not only a loss, but a great affront likewise to their master; and therefore partly out of rage, and partly through covetousness, he undertook this dangerous journey, presuming, that a thing which might be done so secretly, would never come to Solomon's ears; that in the space of three years time, Solomon might have forgot his injunction; or that if he remembered it, he would not be so rigid as to put it in execution; especially as he went not out of Jerusalem through wantonness, or any contempt of authority, but meerly to recover what he had lost, which he might think was a thing very excusable.

took a journey thither, in order to fetch them back.

Upon his return with his servants, the king received intelligence of it and highly incensed at the affront offered his regal dignity in thus contumptuosly transgressing the positive command (even after so solemn an oath on the observance of it) thus severely chastised the delinquent.

Shimei, didſt thou not ſwear to me, that thou wouldſt never ſtir out of this city into any other, to the day of thy death? And like a falſe wretch, thou haſt now broken that ſacred oath, and for that perjury ſhalt die.

Take this for thy inſtruction too, that divine vengeance, ſooner or later finds out the criminal; and that forbearance is ſo far from an acquital, that it aggravates the delayed vengeance.

The hand of God is in this judgment upon thee, not only for the late perjury, but for thy ſins of ancient date; I mean the inſolences againſt my father in the depth of his diſtreſs. Think of this, and remember that God is juſt.

Benaiah then put Shimei to death by the king's order.

Solomon not only ascended the throne of his father David with great glory and splendour, but swayed the royal sceptre without controul.

He had punished those who arrogantly endeavoured to deprive him of his government, conciliated the universal affection of his people, and settled every point necessary to general happiness.

In this interval of profound peace, both at home and abroad, he took to wife the daughter of the king of Egypt, applied himself to the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, which he made much larger and stronger than they were before, and every other business that could aggrandize his own glory, and contribute to the happiness and welfare of his people.

He was young indeed, but want of years prevented him not from doing justice, or the execution of laws, or paying a religious reverence to the authority of his dying father's precepts; for, in a word, such was the pregnancy, even of his early youth, that he ruled every thing with a judgment that might have become the most consummated experience.

Reflecting on the goodness of the God of his father, in raising him to the throne of Israel, and blessing him with peace and plenty, the approbation and love of his subjects, with all that could contribute to his happiness; he thought himself bound to address God by prayer and sacrifice, in acknowledgment of these mercies; thereupon he went to Gibeon, where he offered upon Moses's brazen altar, long before erected there, a thousand victims for a (*e*) burnt-offering.

This piety and zeal was so acceptable to God, that the very night following,

(*e*) *A thouſand victims for a burnt-offering.* Without having recourſe to the many forced ſolutions which have been made upon this paſſage, I ſhall only obſerve, that there is not the leaſt intimation given us, that all theſe ſacrifices were offered in one day; and therefore it is doing no injury to the ſacred text to ſuppoſe, that this was one of the great feſtivals which Solomon might think proper to hold at Gibeon, and that he continued there, until by the daily oblations, this number of burnt-offerings were conſumed.

lowing, he appeared unto him in a dream; and to shew him that the services of his heart and good-will, should not go unrewarded, bade him ask what he would, and it should be granted him.

Solomon pitched upon the greatest and the most valuable thing he could think of, and that which he concluded, would be most agreeable to the approbation of the giver, and at the same time, most advantageous to the receiver. It was not silver, nor gold, nor any thing of those vanities, to which youthful minds are generally attached, that he chose as the only thing worth asking; but he thus entreated the Lord, *Lord grant me a right apprehenſion of matters, and a ſound judgment, that may enable me to govern this people according to truth and juſtice (f).*

This choice was so acceptable to God, that he not only promised him what he desired, but riches and glory besides, assuring him, that he would confer upon him such an exalted degree of understanding, and such practical wisdom, as no man, either public or private, could ever pretend to before him; and adding, that upon condition of his continuing just to the world, obedient in all things to God, treading in the steps, and imitating the eminent virtues of his father, the government should remain in his family for many ages.

Upon these words he awoke, rose out of his bed, worshipped, gave thanks, and then returned to Jerusalem, where he sacrificed to God before the tabernacle, and feasted all his people.

About this time there was a difficult cause brought before him, which is particularly worthy of general observation, as it displays the extraordinary wisdom and justice of Solomon, and holds forth a shining example to all succeeding princes.

There came to the king two common prostitutes for justice. The plaintiff told her tale, to this effect; *This woman and I, live both in a lodging, and it was our fortune to be delivered each of us of a male child, on the ſame day and hour. Within three days this woman having overlaid her own child, and ſmothered it, took mine ſoftly out of my arms as I was aſleep, and laid her's in the place of it.*

Early the next morning, when I was about to ſuckle my own infant,

(f) *Juſtice.* A very eminent father of the Latin Church, (Gregory de officio homines, c. 13.) speaking of the different kinds of dreams, has justly observed, that the organs of our body and our brain, are not unlike the strings of a musical instrument: while the strings are screwed up to a proper pitch, they give an harmonious sound, if touched by a skilful hand; but as soon as they are relaxed, they give none at all. In like manner, when we are awake, our senses touched and directed by our understanding, make an agreeable concert; but when once we are asleep, the instrument has done sounding, unless it be, that the remembrance of what passed when we where awake, comes and presents itself to the mind, and so forms a dream, just as the strings of an instrument, will for some time continue the sound, even after the hand of the artist has left them.

The application of this to Solomon's dream, is easy and natural; for as he had been praying the preceeding day with great ardour and fervency, God was pleased to manifest himself to the eyes of his understanding, and for the confirmation of his faith, to hold that conversation with him, and whether we admit the father's philosophy on this point or not, we cannot deny, that God has it in his power to approach the soul of man, by many different methods, and to actuate and operate upon it, in what manner he pleases unknown to us.

the

the child was not to be found, but a dead one laid in the place; for I know my own child by moſt infallible marks.

I have preſſed her for my child, but ſhe keeps it from me, and bears me down that it is her child ſtill, and I have no witneſs to prove the contrary.

Now Sir, I humbly beſeech your majeſty, to ſee juſtice done betwixt us.

The king then addressing himself to the other woman, demanding of her what she had to alledge in her own behalf. She answered, *ſhe laid no ſuch child there, but the living child was her own, and ſo ſtood upon her juſtification.*

The attendants in general were greatly dubious on whom to fix the imputation of injustice, till the king thought of this expedient. He ordered the living child to be brought, and one of his guards to take his sword, cut the infant in half, just in the middle, and *(g)* divide it betwixt the two pretended mothers, half to the one, and half to the other.

This at first, was deemed a very idle stratagem, till one of the women crying out earnestly, and begging that her companion might have the child, and pass for the mother of it, provided that its life might be spared, and she have the comfort of seeing it yet among the living.

The other woman quietly submitting to the proposal, and not without some seeming satisfaction at the calamity of her neighbour; the king adjudged the child to the right woman upon the evidence of her tenderness and natural affection; highly condemning the wickedness of the other, who, after that she had killed her own child, did what she could to destroy that of her neighbour.

This was so singular an instance of the king's wisdom and justice, that from that day forward, the people honoured and obeyed him, as a prince, that acted by the guidance and direction of a divine impulse.

Solomon then proceeded to take a list of his officers, civil, military and ecclesiastical in his provinces.

There was Uri, the son of Hur, in the tribe of Ephraim, including Bethlehem.

The son of Abinadah, son in law to Solomon, had the command of Dor, and the sea-coast.

The great plain was under Baana, the son of Ahilud, and so far as to the river Jordan.

The son of Geber had the government of the Gileadites, as far as mount Lebanon, within which command there where sixty large and well fortified cities.

Abinadah, that married Basmath, another of Solomon's daughters, had the government of Mahanaine, which comprehends all Galilee, up to Sidon.

Under Baanah was the government of the sea-coast about Asher.

(g) Divide it. Abarbinal, the Jewiſh commentator, is of opinion, that Solomon, by observing very attentively, the countenance and behaviour of the two women, made a diſcovery of the truth, antecedent to this experiment, and that his afterwards commanding the child to be divided, was only to notify to the company what he had before diſcovered. Be this as it may, it no ways depreciates the deciſion itſelf; for though Solomon might from his own obſervations have diſcovered the true mother, yet the reſtoring the child to her, upon the meer ſtrength of ſuch obſervations, would not have been near ſo ſatisfactory and convincing to the bye-ſtanders, as this method was, which we are afterwards told, produced joy and admiration in the hearts of all who were preſent.

Jehosaphat

Jehosaphat commanded the mountains Isiadar, and all the lower Galilee, to the farther side of Jordan.

The whole country of the Benjamites was under the government of Shimei.

And the land beyond Jordan was under Tabar.

These were Solomon's governors, and he had one lieutenant general to superintend them all.

So soon as the people found themselves settled in a state of peace and plenty, and out of fear of any distractions by war or tumult, they gave themselves up to husbandry and improvements; and in a short time advanced their fortunes and possessions (the tribe of Judah especially) to the astonishment of the world.

The king had likewise other officers over the Assyrians, and other barbarous nations, between Egypt and Euphrates, to whom he committed the care of his subsides, those people being tributaries to him.

The daily proportion of provisions that these people furnished every day for the king's own table and entertainment, was thirty * chomers of fine flour, threescore chomers of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred fat lambs, beside deer, birds, fish, game in vast abundance.

He had so prodigious a number of chariots, that there were forty thousand stalls provided for the horses that belonged to them, over and above twenty thousand horsemen that were of his guards; one half being quartered in Jerusalem, near his person, and the other half distributed into out-villages, near the city; and the same officer that was commissary for the expence of the king's table, was appointed also to provide necessaries for the king's house wherever he went.

The wisdom of Solomon proceeding immediately from the fountain of knowledge, and origin of all science, was so far superior to the philosophy and highest attainment of the most learned of his cotemporaries, that his pre-eminence was acknowledged by the most renowned scholars, both among the Egyptians and Hebrews.

This extraordinary prince composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five.

He wrote the history of plants, from the cedar to the hyssop; also of cattle and beasts of the earth; water-fowl, and birds of the air; for he understood the nature of all these creatures, and studied and refined upon their respective properties and dispositions.

Nor did he only know and understand (by a gift from above) but likewise improve his knowledge and understanding of the things, for the help and benefit of mankind, even to the confusion of evil spirits.

When the fame of Solomon's wisdom reached the ears of Hiram, king of Tyre, who had ever retained the

* A chomer, or core, containing about six hundred and five pints English measure; thirty of which amounted to eighteen thousand, one hundred, and fifty English pints, and threescore to thirty six thousand and three hundred. This word in scripture is translated measures.

warmest affection for his father David; that prince sent an embassy to congratulate him on his succession to the throne of Israel, and on the favourable presage of his future prosperity, expressing at the same time, the most ardent design that the government might long continue in the family, Solomon received the ambassadors very cordially, and dispatched by them the following address, to the king their master.

KING SOLOMON TO KING HIRAM, GREETING.

BE it known unto thee O king, that my father David had it a long time in his mind, and purpose to build a temple to the Lord; but being perpetually in war, and under a neceſſity of clearing his hands of his enemies, and make them all his tributaries, before he could attend this great and holy work, he hath left it to me in a time of peace, both to begin and to finiſh it, according to the direction, as well as the prediction of Almighty God. Bleſſed be his great name for the preſent tranquility of my dominions; by his gracious aſſiſtance, I ſhall now dedicate the beſt improvements of this liberty and leiſure to his honour and worſhip; wherefore I make it my requeſt, that you will let ſome of your people go with ſome ſervants of mine to mount Lebanon, to aſſiſt them in cutting down materials towards this building; for the Sydonians underſtand it much better than we do. As for the workmen's wages, whatever you think reaſonable, ſhall be punctually paid them.

Hiram was wonderfully pleased with Solomon's letter, and returned him the following answer;

KING HIRAM TO KING SOLOMON.

NOTHING could have been more welcome to me, than to underſtand that the government of your pious father is devolved, by God's providence, into the hands of ſo excellent ſo wiſe, and ſo virtuous a ſucceſſor; his holy name be praiſed for it. That which you write for, ſhall be done with all care and good-will; for I will give order to cut down, and to export ſuch quantities of the faireſt cedars and cypreſs-trees, as you ſhall have occaſion for. My people ſhall bring them to the ſea-ſide for you, and from thence ſhip them away to what port you pleaſe, where they may lie ready for your men to tranſport them to Jeruſalem It would be a great obligation, after all this, to allow us ſuch a proviſion of corn in exchange, as may ſuit your convenience: for that is the commodity we Iſlanders want moſt.

When king Solomon had received and perused the contents of Hiram's letter; he was pleased with the benevolence of disposition and goodness of heart therein displayed; that as a token of his esteem and respect, he ordered him a yearly present of two thousand chomers of wheat, two thousand vessels of oil, and as many of wine, of seventy two quarts apiece.

This

This was the first earnest of friendship betwixt the two kings, which continued to increase to the last, every day firmer and stronger.

The king ordered his people to provide him thirty thousand workmen, which he disposed of in such an easy method, that their labour should not be grievous to them.

The number of them was thirty thousand, and their post was to do duty for one month, by ten thousand at a time in cutting down wood upon mount Lebanon, and to be relieved at the month's end by the second ten thousand, and the second, after another month, by the third; so that they had two month's liberty to be at their own homes; and thus in a circle, every fourth month, each ten thousand were to take their turn over again. Their inspector general, or super-intendent was *Adoniram.*

Besides these, there were seventy thousand foreigners, formerly designed by David, for the carrying of stones and other materials; eighty thousand stone cutters and masons, and three thousand and three hundred overseers of the work.

Their order was to make use of the largest stones they could get for the foundation, and to have them squared and ready wrought upon the mountains where they grew, and thence to be carried whole to Jerusalem, in which injunction Hiram's men were concerned as well as the rest.

Solomon was now in the fourth year of his reign, when he began this mighty work; and of that year the second month, which the Macedonians called *Artemisius,* and the *Hebrew Zif*; four hundred and eighty years from the Israelites coming out of Egypt. A thousand and twenty years from Abraham's coming out of Mesopotamia into the land of Canaan; fourteen hundred and forty from the deluge; and from the creation of the world, three thousand one hundred and two. It was also in the eleventh year of Hiram, the king of Tyre; and two hundred and forty years after the building of that city.

Josephus, in his description of the temple, says, "The foundation was laid prodigiously deep; and the stones not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to the assault of wind and rain; beside, that they were so wrought one in another, and wedged in the rock, that the strength and curiosity of the basis was not less admirable than the bulk and ornament of the intended superstructure, and one was in all respects answerable to the beauty and magnificence of the other.

The walls were all of a white stone from the ground to the cieling. The height of the building was sixty cubits, * the length as much, and the breadth twenty; over which there was another stage of the same dimensions; so that the whole height of the building, from bottom to top,

* Jewish cubit, according to Calmet, was near twenty two English inches, sixty cubits, therefore must amount to something more than an hundred and nine feet; that is thirty six yards and a foot.

was

was a hundred and twenty cubits, and it looked toward the east.

The porch, or court next to the entrance, was twenty cubits in length, to answer the temple: ten in a breadth, and a hundred and twenty cubits in height.

There was built round about it, and against the outward walls, like so many buttresses to support it, thirty cells, or little houses, in the form of galleries opening one into another.

The length and breadth of these cells was five and twenty cubits each, and the height twenty. And there were two other floors over this, of the same make and proportion, amounting all together to the just height of the lower part of the fabrick: for these cells or galleries went no higher than the top of the first story.

They were all ceiled with cedar, and every partition had its covering apart, independant one of another; they were all likewise fastened together, by long and large beams, in such a manner that they looked but like one piece, and as if the very walls were the stronger for them.

Under these beams were several curious varieties of carving and fret work, gilding, &c. The walls all wainscoted with cedar, and so adorned with works in gold, to make the most splendid appearance imaginable.

The whole frame, was raised upon stones, polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially constructed, that there was no joint to be discerned, nor the least sign of a hammer, or of any working tool: all things being so adjusted and accommodated, one piece to another beforehand, that upon the whole it looked more like the work of Providence and nature, than the product of art or human invention.

As the second story had not a large door to it at the east end, as the lower had, but only some small doors to enter at, from the sides above, Solomon contrived a pair of winding stairs to be cut through the wall, for a passage to the upper part. The inside of the temple was lined with cedar; and the binding of the timber together with strong irons, added greatly to the building.

The king caused it to be laid in two divisions; that is to say, the inner part or holy of holies, of twenty cubits square, which was inaccessible; and the other of forty cubits, which was assigned to the use and service of the priest. In the partition wall, betwixt the inner and outward parts of the temple, he built large cedar doors, which were richly gilt, and exquisitely carved, beside choice subjects of nature and history, embroidered upon a hanging veil before it, of rich silks and fine linnen, interwoven with beautiful flowers, and the colours all in perfection.

Solomon caused also to be formed two cherubims of massy gold, which he dedicated to God in the holy place, being each of them five cubits high, and two wings, each of them of five cubits in length; which being stretched out, one touched the south side. and the other the north; and with their

their other two wings, they met one another, over-spreading the holy ark in the middle. These cherubims surpassed all description. The very floor of the temple was overlaid with beaten gold, the doors very large, and proportioned to the height of the walls, twenty cubits broad, and still gold upon gold.

In short this superb edifice might be deemed a composition of all that is valuable in nature, as there was a curious curtain, put up at this gate, as at the other, but none at the entrance into the porch.

It having been reported to king Solomon, that there lived at Tyre, a man named Hiram eminent for his extraordinary skill in workmanship upon gold, silver and other metals, being superior in his art to the whole fraternity. His mother was of the tribe of Naphthali, and his father, by extraction, an Israelite. He sent for this man from Tyre, and employed him in his business, and whenever Solomon had any thing to do that was difficult or curious, it was performed by Hiram.

He cast him two brazen hollow pillars of four fingers thick in the metal, eighteen cubits high, and twelve in circumference; two chapiters of brass on the top of the two pillars, five cubits each.

These were covered with a kind of brass net work; and below them were flowers or lilly work of the same contrivance, with two rows of pomegranates hanging down, a hundred in each row. These two pillars he placed in the entrance of the porch; one on the right hand, which he called *Jachin*, and the other on the left, which he called *Boaz*.

He made a vessel also of molten brass, somewhat after the figure of a globe, cut off in the middle, which for the largeness of it he called his sea.

It was made goblet fashion; the diameter ten cubits, from side to side, four fingers thick, with a twisted pillar of one cubit over, under the middle of it for a supporter.

Around this pillar were placed the figures of twelve bulls, or oxen; facing it, by three and three, the four principal quarters of east, west north and south. They stood in a position lower behind than before, which was both a support to the weight, and kept it firm and steady.

This sea, or vessel, held three thousand baths, reckoning every bath at about ten English pottles.

Hiram made also ten bases of brass of an oblong square, and all of the same form and dimensions; that is, five cubits in length, each of them, four in breadth, and six in height.

The several pieces were cast apart and then put together after this manner:

There were four pillars, or undersetters, one to the corner of every base, which were so incorporated with the rest of the work, that they served not only to uphold the weight, but to keep the sides tight one to another.

Upon the squares, where the figures of a lion, a bull, and an eagle, &c. images were also placed upon the pillars, and upon the plates of the borders.

The whole work was mounted upon four wheels, a cubit and an half over, all of cast work; nave-spokes, and every thing belonging to it; the whole was executed with amazing accuracy and symmetry.

The angels were formed with embossed work of shoulders, and paws of lions, and talents of eagles; with rests or lodges of rail upon them to receive the laver; but so artificially fitted to the fingers of those creatures, as they were represented upon the pannels, together with branches of palm-trees intermixed upon the same piece, that every thing looked as natural as life.

Such was the structure of the ten bases; and to these bases he made ten lavers of the same metal, and of an oval form, each containing forty baths; the height four cubits, and the diameter as much.

These ten lavers were set upon as many bases, which in their language they called Mechenoth. They were all placed in the temple; five of them on the left hand, at the north side; and the other five at the south side, on the right, looking toward the east. In the same place stood likewise, the brazen sea. They were all filled with water; the sea for the use of the priests to wash their hands and feet with, upon entering the sanctuary, before they went up to the altar; and the rest of the lavers, for cleaning of the entrails, and other parts of burnt-offerings.

He erected moreover a brazen altar of twenty cubits in length, as many over, and ten in depth, providing all the vessels thereunto belonging of the same stuff, as boilers, water-pots, flesh-hooks, &c. He dedicated also a great number of tables, and one of pure gold for the shew-bread, larger than the rest. But there were many others of several forms and sizes, not much inferior to that for the shew-bread, and sufficient to hold twenty thousand golden cups and vessels, and twice the number of silver ones.

He made a provision likewise of twelve thousand candlesticks, according to the appointment of Moses; and one of them to be applied by a peculiar dedication to the service of the temple, and there to be kept with lights in them, burning day and night after the direction of the law.

The table for the shew-bread, was placed on the north side, over against the candlestick which stood on the south. Betwixt these two was the golden altar.

This was all in the fore part of the temple of forty cubits, and a partition veil betwixt that and the holy of holies, where the ark of the covenant was to be kept.

Solomon likewise caused to be made fourscore thousand wine cups, and ten thousand golden vessels, and goblets of other sorts and fashions, and twice as many silver ones.

Plates and dishes of gold were made to steep the flour in upon the altar, eighty thousand; and of silver double the number. Also golden measures, such as the Mosaical

Hin

Hin * and assaron, twenty thousand; as many more of silver.

There were twenty thousand golden censers for incense, and fifty thousand others to carry fire from the great altar to the little one within the temple.

This mighty prince provided a thousand priest habits; such as robes, ephods, suits of precious stones, &c. but there was but one crown with Moses's inscription of God upon it.

There were also silken vests, and purple girdles for the priests, ten thousand of each; two hundred thousand trumpeters, according to the institution of Moses and as many silken stoles for the Levites that chaunted the holy hymns, beside four hundred thousand musical instruments: as harps, psalteries, and the like, which were made of a mixt metal betwixt gold and silver, to accompany the voices.

In short, neither expence nor labour was spared to complete the strength and magnificence of this stupendous structure; which long remained a monument of the founder's zeal for the honour of God, and his holy worship.

When the preparatory part was over, the sacred utensils were deposited in the holy treasury, and set apart for religious uses.

The temple itself was fenced with an enclosure of three feet in height [in Hebrew gison] to keep out the laity from entering into a place where only the priests were to be admitted.

Beyond this partition was another square court or building, with large portico's or galleries about it, and four stately gates, that opened east, west, north and south; the doors all plated and inlaid with gold. This place was common to all people, provided they came thither with that purity of preparation and legal qualification which law required.

The outward building was superb beyond expression, and arduous beyond conception, there were hollows filled up, which from their depth might be deemed the work of ages; yet these were levelled in order to be a foundation for this astonishing fabrick.

The port was encompassed again with a kind of double cloister, and two rows of pillars to support it, every pillar being cut whole out of the rock. The doors were all silver-work; the roof fretwork, and the wainscotting all of cedar.

This curious edifice, was completed in the short space of seven years; and it is difficult to determine, which most demands our admiration; the magnitude, sumptuousness, and splendor of the work itself; or the shortness of the time in which it was effected; as the business of ages was transacted with in the narrow compass of a few years.

The mighty undertaking being now brought to perfection, Solomon

* The Hin, according to Calmet, contained something more than ten English pints. The assaron was the equal with the gomer, or omer. And according to the aforesaid author, contained something more than six of our pints.

wrote

wrote to the elders of Israel, and the heads of the tribes, to summon the people up to Jerusalem to see the temple, and to assist in transporting thither the ark of the covenant.

The resolution was duly notified and in the seventh month, which was called *Ethanim*, with much difficulty they were convened.

In this month was the feast of tabernacles, which among the Israelites was accounted the most sacred and solemn of their festivals. So the priests took up the ark, and Moses's tabernacle, with the holy vessels belonging to the altar, and carrying them all into the temple. The king, and the whole congregation, with the Levites, marching before them, with their sacrifices and oblations, sprinkling the ground as they passed, with their blood, and perfuming the air with the fragrancy of incense and sweet odours, to such a degree, that people were sensible of it at a distance, and reflected upon the delicacy of the breath they drew, as no less than a celestial influence, inferring from that agreeable alteration, that God himself had descended from Heaven to consecrate the temple that was newly built, and dedicated to himself, and therein to take up his abode. For though the whole congregation came singing and dancing all the way to the temple, they went on fresh and cheerfully to their journey's end.

This was the manner of their transporting the ark.

On their approach to the holy of holies, where it was to be deposited the people withdrew, and the priests only that brought it, carried it into the oracle, and there placed it under the figures of the two cherubims that were represented with the points of their wings touching one another, which looked like a kind of cover and protection to the ark, that was under them.

The ark contained nothing more than the two tables of stone, on which were engraved the ten commandments, as God delivered them upon *Mount Sinai*.

The candlestick, table and golden altar, stood in the same order in the sanctuary, as they did at first in the tabernacle, when they offered their daily sacrifices.

The brazen altar was placed directly against the door, for the better view of the magnificence of the worship on the other side; and then the rest of the holy utensils and vessels, were all laid up together in the temple.

The ark being fixed with the utmost order and solemnity, and the priests withdrawn from the sacred spot, there descended a cloud, which so filled and darkened the place, that they could hardly see. It resembled not an heavy lowering sky, but a mild dew, and seemed to intimate the divine approbation of the pious work in which they were engaged; and also as a promise that the Almighty would vouchsafe to dwell there as a place peculiarly devoted to his honour and worship.

While the people were contemplating on the mighty event, Solomon stood up, and with a grace and majesty, becoming the dignity of the subject

subject and occasion, addressed himself in a short prayer to Almighty God, in words to this effect:

"O Lord, thou that inhabitest eternity, and hast raised out of nothing the mighty fabrick of this universe; the Heavens, the air, the earth, and the sea; thou that fillest the whole and every thing that is in it, and art thyself unbounded and incomprehensible; look down graciously upon thy servants that have presumed to erect a temple here to the honour of thy great name.

Lord hear our prayers, and receive our sacrifices; thou that art every where, vouchsafe also to be with us; thou that seest and hearest all things, look down from thy throne in Heaven and give ear to our supplications in this place; thou that never failest to assist those that call upon thee night and day, and love and serve thee as they ought to do, have mercy upon us."

Having thus humbly addressed the God of Israel in prayer and supplication, the king turning himself to the people, reminding them of the wonderful things that had been revealed to his father David in dreams and visions; some of which had been accomplished, and others were yet to come, concerning himself, his name, his succession to the throne, his building of the temple, the establishment of the family, and the welfare and prosperity of the nation.

"Now says he, a great part of these predictions being already verified, you are to thank God, not only for the comforts you enjoy but for the good things also that are further promised, and to look upon the former only as the earnest of greater blessings."

After the speaking of these words, the king turned his eye again toward the temple, and thus addressed the Divine Majesty.

"O Lord, what are the most glorious works of man, in comparison, even with the smallest of thy benefits and mercies? O what can we that have nothing to give, pretend to offer thee that wantest nothing, when the very least of thy bounties are above and beyond all requital?

We can only render thee praise, acknowledgment, and thanksgiving; and that indeed is a prerogative that thou hast vouchsafed to mankind above all other creatures; so that this I am not only allowed, but obliged to do, in the name of myself, my family, and the whole people of Israel, for all thy multiplyed favours and infinite goodness towards us.

As we have no other way of expressing our duty and affections, than by means of bare empty words, that are only air, be pleased to accept of our humble gratitude. First, for thy gracious goodness to my father, in raising him from a shepherds crook, to an imperial scepter. Next, for making good to myself all thy promises and predictions in my favour.

Lord continue thy bounties to us, as to thy chosen people. Preserve, prosper, and perpetuate the government to our family, by a constant train of successions from generation to generation, according to thy promises to my father, living and dying.

Do thou O Lord, grant us all this; and to all mine, the virtues and the grace that may make them acceptable in thy sight.

I do further most humbly beseech thee, to let thy Holy Spirit descend upon this temple, in the blessing of thy peculiar presence. Heaven and earth I know are too little for thy majesty and glory; and much more the workmanship of mens hands, in a fabric of wood and stone; and yet I cannot but presume to implore thy providence and protection over it.

O Almighty Lord, preserve it from the power and rage of enemies; and be pleased to take care of it, as thy own property and possession; and if at any time hereafter thou shalt be moved in thy just displeasure to punish this people for their transgressions, with famine, pestilence, or any other judgment, according to the degree of their wickedness, Lord, be pleased upon their humble supplications to thee in thine own house, with prayers and tears, for mercy and forgivness, and to remove thy judgment.

This I beseech thee, not for the Israelites alone, but for the relief indifferently of all people whatsoever, that shall offer up their petitions to thee in this holy place. By this means it will appear to the whole world, that this is thy house, and we thy people; and that the Israelites are not so inhuman, as to envy strangers, the common dispensations of the author and fountain of all our happiness.

After this humble and affectionate prayer for the divine blessing on his work, Solomon cast himself upon the ground, and having continued a short time in that posture of adoration, he rose and offered sacrifices in abundance; with the satisfaction of an assurance, by a token from God, that his oblations were accepted; for there fell a flash of fire from heaven, that shot through the air, directly down to the altar, and consumed the offerings.

This prodigy being seen by the whole multitude, they all looked upon it as a certain sign of God's owning both the worship and the temple, which filled those with exceeding joy, that they all fell down together, and unanimously joined in praise and adoration.

Solomon continued his praises and thanksgivings, persuading and encouraging the multitude to do the like, for so clear an evidence of God's special favour toward them.

The king charged the people to be instant with God in prayer, for the continuance of his goodness and graces to them, that they might live in holiness and righteousness, without any spot or blemish, and walk in the steps, and according to the divine traditions of Moses, to their lives end. This being the sure and only way to render the Israelites the happiest people of all mortals.

He reminded them also, that their felicity was no way to be secured and augmented, but by the means by which it was acquired, as being not only the effect, but the reward of piety and justice. And farther added, that it was much easier to get what they wanted, than to keep what they had got; admonishing them to beware,

beware, lest they forfeited, by any misdemeanor, what they had gained by their obedience.

The king having finished his solemn charge, dismissed the assembly, after he had offered up in sacrifice for himself and his people, twelve thousand calves, and a hundred and twenty thousand lambs.

This was the first blood that was spilt in the temple; and the Israelites with their wives and children, were all feasted at it.

There was celebrated at the same time before the temple, besides this solemnity, the feast of tabernacles, which lasted fourteen days at the king's expence, with great magnificence and splendour.

The various ceremonies on this occasion, being performed with that solemnity, which was requisite; every man was now returning to his habitation; but not without making infinite acknowledgments of the king's wisdom, care, and bounty in all respects, and prayers for his long life, and the continuance of the people under the blessing of his government.

They went back singing, rejoicing, and giving glory to God, and their hearts were so elated with the transaction, in which they had been engaged, and the manifest tokens they had received of the divine favour and approbation, that they proceeded on their way with alacrity and cheerfulness, without the least sense of fatigue or danger.

The ark being now deposited in the temple and the beauty and magnificence of that glorious structure, with all due ceremony and solemnity set forth, the congregation dispersed, and returned home, when God appeared a second time to Solomon in his sleep, and a voice told him, *that God had accepted his sacrifices, and heard his prayers; that he would preserve his temple, and make it the house of his dwelling; so long as he himself, and his posterity and people should continue to walk before him, as David his father did, in pureness of heart; promising him, upon that condition, to advance him to the highest degree of earthly bliss; to perpetuate the throne of Israel to his family, so that there should never want a prince of that line, and of the tribe of Judah to sway the scepter of Israel.*

But on the other hand, if ever they should depart from, or forget the worship they professed, and run after strange Gods, they should be quite routed out from off the face of the earth, and Israel be no longer a people; but after being torn to pieces, and broken with wars, and other calamities at home, be forced to shift for themselves in the wide world, as vagrants and exiles.

And the voice further told him, *that in case of such an apostacy, his new erected fabric should, with the divine permission be sacked and burned by the hands of Barbarians, and Jerusalem itself laid in rubish and ashes, by a merciless enemy; insomuch that the people should stand amazed at the very report of so incredible a misery and distress, and be wondering one to another how it should come to pass, that a people who were but yesterday*

terday the envy of all mankind, for riches, external glory, and reputation, ſhould now on a ſudden be ſunk and loſt to the laſt degree of wretchedneſs and contempt, and reduced to this deſpicable ſtate too, by the ſame hand that raiſe them.

To which queſtion their own guilty conſciences ſhall make this anſwer. We have forſaken our God, we have abandoned our religion of our forefathers, and of our country. And all this is juſtly befallen us for our ſins.

This was the ſubſtance of Solomon's dream, or vision, as it is transmitted to us by the ſacred hiſtorian.

When this magnificent ſtructure was raiſed and conſecrated to the divine worſhip and ſervice, Solomon entered upon the building of a royal palace for himſelf, which was full thirteen years in perfecting.

He was not ſo ſolicitous and intent upon the latter, as the former, which in truth was great and artificial to a miracle; and without God's peculiar bleſſing and aſſiſtance, could not have been compleated in that compaſs of years.

Solomon's court indeed was an appearance much inferior to the majeſty of his temple, not only for want of time to provide his materials, but becauſe it was deſigned only for the honour and convenience of a temporal prince, and the other dedicated to the KING of kings; ſo that the work was longer in finiſhing.

However, it was ſufficient to anſwer the end for which it was deſigned, being a work that redounded much to the glory both of the prince and people.

But in this place it may neither be unprofitable nor unentertaining, to recite an account of the model and diſpoſition of this ſtupendous fabric.

There was erected, upon ſeveral rows of pillars, a ſpacious pile of building, in the nature of a common hall, for the hearing of cauſes. It was a hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and thirty in depth, nor could it well be leſs, to receive the vaſt multitudes that came thronging thither from all parts for juſtice.

It was ſupported by ſixteen ſquare columns, covered with corinthian work in cedar, and fortified with double doors curiouſly wrought, that ſerved both for the ſecurity and the ornament of the place.

In the middle of the court or hall, was another edifice of thirty cubits ſquare, and under-ſet with ſtrong pillars, in which quarter was a throne of ſtate, where the king himſelf uſed to ſit perſonally in judgment.

Adjoining to this royal court of juſtice, was the queen's houſe and other apartments, for diverſion and retreat, after the fatigue of buſineſs, all fitted up with cedar, and raiſed upon huge ſtones, of ten cubits ſquare, which were partly plain, and in part overlaid with the moſt precious marble, after the faſhion of the moſt magnificent palaces or temples.

The rooms were hung with three depths of rich hangings, and beautified with images, in ſculpture, of trees, plants, branches, leaves, &c. and all

so marvellously wrought, that they appeared to the eye to be all in motion.

The remainder of the space up to the cieling, was all set out with delicate parti-coloured figures, upon white ground; and beside these, there was a great variety of other chambers for retirement or delight; long and large galleries; vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, elegantly adorned with costly furniture and gildings; beside which all the services for the king's table were of pure gold.

It would be endless to give a particular account of this mighty building, which comprehends such an infinite diversity of chambers and offices, great and small; some under ground, others above, as vaults, turrets, and the like.

In a word, the whole house was composed of white marble, cedar, gold, and silver, with precious stones, intermingled upon the walls or cielings, after the manner of the adorning of the temple.

There was also erected a very fair, large ivory throne, with delicate carved work and engraven upon it after the fashion of a tribunal. There were six steps that led up to it. The figure of a lion at each end of every step, and two lions above; that is, one on either hand of the state.

As the king rested upon his throne, there were arms put forth, as in a readiness to take care of him, and to receive him; and the figure of a bullock placed in a proper posture under him for his support. The whole piece being covered with gold.

The two magnificent structures were twenty years in finishing. And Hiram king of Tyre, contributed to the mighty work. It was a huge mass of gold, and a greater of silver, besides a great quantity of cedar and fir. Nor was Solomon unmindfull of the presents he made him; for he sent him every year great quantities of corn, wine, and oil, a supply that Hiram, being an Islander, stood most in need of.

He bestowed upon him, moreover twenty cities upon the borders of Galilee, not far from Tyre, of which upon review and consideration, he declined the acceptance, with a respectful excuse to Solomon, that he had no need of them.

From this refusal, that part of the country was called *Cabul*, which in the Phænician language, signified, it does not please me.

So great was the king of Tyre's esteem and reliance on the wisdom of the king of Israel, that whenever any perplexed case offered itself to his consideration, he applied himself to that extraordinary prince for his judgment and direction. Solomon never failed to answer him to his satisfaction, according to the true reason and nature of the matter in hand.

Menander, the historian, who translated Tyrian annals, out of the Phænician tongue into the greek, makes mention of these two princes as follows.

" Hiram the son of Abibale, succ-
" ceeded his father in the kingdom
" of Tyre. He lived there fifty years,
" and reigned four and thirty.

" He annexed a piece of forced

" ground, called the great field, to " the island, and dedicated a golden " pillar to Jupiter in his temple. " He cut down materials also in " abundance, upon mount Lebanon, " for the covering of Holy Palaces; " and pulling down ancient temples, " but built new ones to Hercules and " Astarte.

" He erected a statue for Hercules " in the month of Peritius; and then " in an expedition against the Ey- " ceans, for not paying the duty of " a tribute, as they ought to have " done, he overcame them, and re- " turned home again.

" In his days there was one Ab- " demonus, a young man that took " upon him to give Solomon, the " king of Jerusalem, a solution of all " dark and mysterious questions that " should be put to him."

Ditus also writes to this effect.

" Abibale, being now dead, Hiram " his son succeeded him, who by fill- " ing up void places on the east " quarter of the town, enlarged the " borders, and brought the temple " of Olympian Jupiter, that before " stood apart, and at a distance into " the compass of the city; enriching " and adorning it with golden offer- " ings to a very great value; after " which he ordered the cutting down " of cedars upon mount Lebanon " for the use of Holy places."

He farther adds, " that Solomon, " the king of Jerusalem, often sent " problems to Hiram, upon the for- " feit of a great sum of money, if he " failed of expounding them. These " difficult cases were afterwards not " only unravelled by Abdemonus a " Tyrian, but new propositions start- " ed by him, which Solomon himself " not being able to resolve, was ob- " liged to refund the greatest part of " the money." Thus far according to Ditus.

The fortifications of Jerusalem being deemed insufficient for the defence of that spacious and opulent city; king Solomon having finished the temple of the Lord, and his own palace, in the most sumptuous manner, applied himself to the completion of such repairs as were deemed necessary for the security of the place.

He built several cities also of considerable note as Asor, Megiddo, and Gereze, in the land of the Philistines, which Pharoah the king of Egypt had formerly taken by assault, and raising it to the ground, put every creature in it to the sword, giving it afterward to his daughter upon the match with Solomon.

This city the king rebuilt, for the strength of its situation, and the use it might be of to the government, as well in war as peace.

He built likewise not far from thence, Betharum and Baalath, beside other places of pleasure, with respect to the temperature of the climate, the delicacy of the fruits, and effects of the water.

He possessed himself after this of the entrance into the desert that lies towards Syria, where he built a very fair city, two days journey from the upper Syria, one from Euphrates, and six from Babylon.

This city was erected at such a distance from the habitable part of the country, in order to supply travellers,

vellers, who passed through the desarts with water, as it abounded with springs and fountains.

This town being built, walled, and strongly fortified, was called *Tadmor*, which name it bears among the Syrians to this day. But the Greeks called it *Palmyra*.

As many persons laudably inquisitive in sacred matters, have discovered great desire to know the cause, wherefore the king of Egypt, from before the time of Abraham, to the days of Solomon, being upwards of thirteen hundred years, are called by the name of Pharaoh, we think it proper to observe in this place, that Pharoah, in the Egyptian language, signifies as much as king. That they were brought up by other names; and that upon coming to the exercise of a public character, they exchange the distinction of the family, for the common name of power.

Thus it was with the kings of Alexandria, who were educated by one name, and governed under another; being all called Ptolemies, from the first of their kings *.

So it was with the Roman emperors, who in case of such an elevation, dropped their private and hereditary names, and were all called Cesar, with respect to the character of a sovereign power.

Nor do we find in the whole history of the Jewish nation, that after Pharaoh, the father in law of Solomon, there was never any other king of Egypt known by that name.

There was still a stubborn remnant of the Canaanites, betwixt Mount Lebanon, and the city of Amathe, who for some time disputed their allegiance to the kings of Israel, till Solomon at last made them his tributaries, upon condition of furnishing him yearly with such a certain number of slaves, as was agreed upon to be employed in tilling the land, and other sorts of drudgery, for the Israelites were not employed in any work that was servile, neither would it have been reasonable, when God had subdued so many nations to his power, for the conquerors to descend to do the business of their captives.

As to the Israelites, their genius lay more in arms, chariots, horses, exploits of war, and military exercises.

The Canaanites in the mean time were held to their labour, and six hundred officers of the king's put over them, to appoint them their tasks, and keep them to their work.

Solomon likewise for re-defence of his kingdom, caused a fleet of ships to be built in *Ezion-Geber*, an Egyptian bay upon the red-sea. This port was called *Beneric*, not far from the city of *Elan*, which in those days was reckoned to be under the jurisdiction of the Hebrews.

* This was it, perhaps, that made Herodotus of Halicarnaſſus, in his account of the ſucceſſor to Minœus the first king of Memphis, reckon up to three hundred and thirty kings, referring to the number without mentioning their names, Pharaoh being one common name to them all. Now upon the coming of a woman afterwards to the government, he speaks of her by the particular name of Nicaulis, the appellation of Pharaoh being only proper to the other ſex.

In

In the building, fitting and rigging out of this navy, the king was greatly assisted by Hiram, who sent him as many expert pilots and skilful marriners, as he had occasion for, to conduct his officers to the land of *Ophir*, since called *India*, where having got together, four hundred * talents of gold, they returned with it to the king.

The king of Israel's extraordinary virtue and wisdom, having spread his fame throughout the known world, had consequently reached the ears of the queen of *Sheba*, an adjacent kingdom, who being a princess of extraordinary understanding, and highly accomplished, the renown of his character had excited her impatience to hear and see the king himself, wisely concluding, that experimental proof surpassed the most confirmed report, which, on proper examination might be found inconclusive or unauthenticated. Having debated the point for some time with herself, she came to a resolution, notwithstanding all the hazards and difficulties of a long and tedious journey, to make him an honourable visit, for the satisfaction of her curiosity, as well as her inclination and judgment; and to enjoy the benefit of instruction from that wisdom, of which she had heard such an extraordinary account.

With this determination she set forward toward Jerusalem, with a train and equipage suitable to her royal dignity, taking with her a number of camels, laden with gold, a great variety of rich perfumes, and precious stones.

Upon her arrival, the king received her with all possible honour, courtesy and respect; and with so much ease and clearness solved all the difficulties she proposed, that with astonishment she beheld a display of his surprising power, far superior to that which had been generally rumoured concerning it.

She greatly admired the magnificence of his palace, the order and disposition of the building, and at the king's incomparable skill, through the whole contrivance and conduct, but nothing moved her admiration more, than the masterly execution of that fabrick, called the Grove of *Lebanon;* the elegant and regular course of his entertainments; the discipline and œconomy of his household; and the peculiar grace and propriety, with which he conducted all his concerns.

She was likewise infinitely pleased with the sight of the daily sacrifices, and the application, care, and veneration, with which the Priests and Levites performed their part in the worship.

The regularity and order of their stated worship, employed her thoughts day and night, and so exceedingly affected her mind, that she broke out into this rapturous address:

* Four hundred talents in weight amounted to forty five thousand six hundred and ninety five pounds troy, and their value in gold was worth two million one hundred and ninety thousand pounds English money.

Great

Great prince, report is so doubtful and uncertain, that without a demonstrative and experimental confirmation of the truth of what we hear, we are forced to suspend our assent, especially where the fame of things relates either to extreme good or evil; but with respect to your incomparable faculties; that is, to the advantages of the mind in a superlative degree of knowledge and understanding, and the glory of your outward state, the rumour has been so far from partial, that it falls short even of a common justice; for though common fame reported as much to your honour as words could express, I have yet the happiness at this present time to see much more than I heard. Blessed are the Hebrews, blessed are the friends and people of Solomon, that stand ever before him, and hear his wisdom; and blessed be God for his goodness to this land and nation, in placing them under the government of so excellent a prince.

Nor did this great princess testify her admiration of the extraordinary endowments of Solomon by words alone, but as a farther instance of the high respect she had for the king, she made him a present of twenty talents of gold, aromatical spices, rich perfumes, and precious stones, to a prodigious value *.

Nor was the king of Israel wanting in grateful acknowledgment of the favour thus conferred upon him, for he denied the queen nothing, and was much readier to give, than she to ask, even to the preventing of her askings. After this reciprocal interchange of presents given and taken, the queen returned back to their own country.

Soon after the departure of the queen of Sheba, Solomon's fleet returned from Ophir, (otherwise called the land of gold) with stones for jewels, and pine wood in abundance; the latter was made use of partly for pillars and supporters to the king's temple and palace, and partly for musical instruments, as harps, cymbals, psalteries, and the like, for the Levites to glorify God upon in company with their voices †.

This plate-fleet brought the king six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, over and above the merchants adventure, and what the governors and kings of Arabia sent him for presents. Of this gold he caused to be cast two hundred targets, weighing sixty hundred shekels of gold each; and these were all hung up in the great hall of the Grove of Lebanon. His drinking cups were all of beaten gold too, garnished with precious stones, and most curiously wrought by eminent artists; in short,

* They speak also of a root of balsam that she brought with her, which (according to a tradition we have) was the first plant of the kind that ever came into Judea, where it hath propagated so wonderfully ever since.

† It is to be noted, that for size and beauty, Solomon had never seen any of this sort of wood comparable to it before. This was not the wood that passes commonly upon the world for pine, in the way of trade, betwixt buyers and sellers: this has somewhat of the grain of a fig-tree, only whiter, and more glossy. We thought it not amiss to advertise the reader of this common mistake, that falls so naturally upon this occasion into Solomon's story.

the rest of his utensils were of the same metal ‡.

The renown of Solomon's wisdom, power, and magnificence having now extended to the remotest climates, several potent princes most ardently desired to see him, and embraced every opportunity of testifying by their submission, and munificence the veneration in which they held his dignified character. They sent him gold and silver plate, purple robes, spices and perfumes of all sorts, horses, chariots, and mules for burden, such as for strength and beauty they thought might be most acceptable to the king; so that he had now an addition of four hundred chariots to what he had before; that is, a thousand chariots, and twelve thousand horses, that for beauty and speed were beyond all others; and to grace the spectacle, they had the flower of the youth to ride and manage them. They were all comely persons, in purple vest; their hair flowing, which added a lustre to their motion, and a dignity to their general appearance.

This was the body guard, which with their arms and quivers, attended the king's chariot (himself mounted in it, cloathed in white) to a pleasant retirement not far from the city, in which for the curious gardens, walks, and fountains, and the fruitfulness of the place, he took great delight.

Such was the regularity and preciseness of this extraordinary prince, in the minutest cases, that fell under his inspection, that he provided for the very paving of the highways that led to his palace at Jerusalem, partly for the convenience of passengers, and partly for his own magnificence.

He kept not many chariots about his person, but quartered them here and there by certain numbers in the adjacent towns; and these places were called his chariot-towns.

Silver was as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones; and cedars, which had never been seen in Judea before, were now as common as mulberry-trees.

He gave commission also to his Egyptian merchants to buy him a provision of chariots with two horses, at the price of six hundred silver drachmas a-piece; and these were to be sent away to the kings of Syria, and beyond the river Euphrates.

The impartiality of the sacred historian is in no instance more evident, than in his recital of the transaction that occurred during the reign of this memorable prince; who is represented as the most pious, glorious, and wise monarch, that ever swayed the scepter of Israel in the former part of his government; and as justly censured for departing in the latter clause of it, from the precepts of his forefather, and sullying the glories he had before acquired.

‡ There was no trading with money in this case? for the king had his ships in the sea of Tarsus that merchandised with foreign nations; and in exchange for commodities of his own, brought him back gold and silver, great quantities of ivory black, apes, &c. Going and coming, they reckoned upon this expedition as a three years voyage.

His

His raging lust after women, transported him beyond all bounds; nor could the women of his own country serve his turn, for he took indifferently women of all nations, Sidonians, Tyrians, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. contrary to the institution of Moses, which forbid the Hebrews any intercourse of marriage with strangers, wisely foreseeing, the strange women should inveigle them over to worship strange Gods too.

This was the true reason of the precaution against such marriges; for the violation of one law, is but a step toward the breaking of another; and the taking of a prohibited wife, naturally led to the embracing of a prohibited religion.

But Solomon's sensual appetite was deaf to all counsels of sobriety and reason. He had no less than seven * hundred wives, that were princesses, (the daughter of the king of Egypt for one,) and three hundred concubines; and the passion he had for the charms of their conversation carried him into compliances with them in the impiety of their practices and opinions, as the most effectual earnest he could give them of his tenderness and affection.

As he grew more advanced in years, he felt the decay of age in his mind, as well as in his body, and still as he became more and more careless and remiss in the exercise of the true worship, he was the more easily prevailed upon to join with these strange women in a false one; nor was this the first breach of the law that he was guilty of, for he had transgressed the rule, in the very figures of his bulls, under his brazen sea, and in the lions afterward, that were set as a guard upon the throne, which were all directly against a positive institution.

He had at the same time in his own family, the most glorious precedent for honour and virtue, in the example of his father, whose piety and practice was so expressly recommended to his imitation, that God inculcated the charge over and over to him in his sleep; and upon the pain of his utmost displeasure, enjoined him to tread in his father's steps.

* This he neglected to do, and came in the conclusion to an ignominious end.

The eye of omniscience, having beheld his vicious practices, it pleased God at length to let him know, that his displeasure was kindled against him, by sending a prophet to assure him, *That his wickedneſs was not ſo ſecret, and he ſhould not paſs long unpuniſhed; but in regard to a promiſe from heaven to his father, that he ſhould have no other ſucceſſor, the prophet told him that his government ſhould not be taken from him while he was living, but that after his death, his ſon ſhould ſuffer for the*

* This is a circumstance that greatly terminates Solomon's character; and upon first reading it, one is very apt to wonder what possible use he could make of this milliad of wives and concubines: but when we consider, that he was between forty and fifty years old, before he ran into this excess, it is most reasonable to think, that he kept this multitude of women more for state than any other service; and that this custom still prevails among the eastern princes, who have a great number of wives, whom they never saw, is attested by travellers of the greatest credit and authority.

iniquities

iniquities, of his father; not that there ſhould be an univerſal defection, but that ten tribes only ſhould revolt, and the other two continue in their allegiance to the ſon of Solomon, for his grand father's ſake, and for the ſake of the temple at Jeruſalem, which God had made choice of for the place of his habitation.

This severe chastisement, which foretold his sudden dejection from the most exalted glory and dignity, to the lowest state and condition, wounded him to the very soul; nor could he, on reflection, deny the justice of the sentence.

Some short time after this denouncing message by the Prophet, God, stirred up a bitter enemy against Solomon, whose name was *Hadad*, an Edomite by birth, and a branch of the royal family. The ground of his animosity was as follows:

When the Hebrews over-ran the country of Edom, under the command of Joab, who at that time was David's general. Joab having subdued the people, put to the sword all the males he could find in the province that were able to bear arms, and this execution continued for six months.

This Hadad who in those days was but a child, made his escape to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who not only received him with great humanity, but very generously gave him houses, lands and revenues for his entertainment, and conceived such an affection further for him, upon his growing up, that he married him to his own wife's sister, whose name was *Taphenes*, who bore him, a son that was trained up with the children of Pharaoh.

In process of time news was brought to Egypt, that David and Joab were both dead; and Hadad, upon these tidings desired Pharaoh's leave to return to his own country.

The king, not well pleased with his request, asked him what he wanted, or what he meant by that earnestness to leave the best friend he had in the world? and though he pressed him most earnestly he could not as yet prevail.

Solomon being now in a declining condition, and the measure of his iniquity well nigh full, God put it into Pharaoh's heart, whom he had hitherto restrained to let Hadad return; so that he came forthwith into Edom, with a design to sir up the people to a rebellion against Solomon.

But finding the garrisons so strong, and the country in such a posture, that there was no possibility of success by a surprize, he took new measures, and went from thence into Syria, where he joined interest with one *Rezon*, a fugitive from his master *Hadadezer*, the king of *Zoab*, and a famous captain of a body of *banditti*, that ravaged the country at pleasure.

Hadad entered into a league with this man; and, with his assistance, subdued that part of Syria, where he got himself to be declared king, and made so many inroads upon the land of the Israelites, that murder and plunder generally prevailed even during the reign of the once potent king Solomon.

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Nor were these affronts and indignities from a stranger, all that the king suffered; for a more dangerous conspiracy was formed against him at the same time, in his own kingdom, by *Jeroboam*, the son of *Nebat*, a man of a turbulent and ambitious spirit, and one who was possessed with a notion, that he had long since received from an old prophecy, an account of the part he was to bear in the overturning of the government.

Jeroboam being left by his father very young, and under the tuition of his mother: Solomon took notice of him as he grew up towards man's estate, for a youth of promising parts, and made him overseer of his works, being at that time repairing and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

He acquitted himself so well in that commission, that he gave him the military command of the tribe of Joseph, as a consideration for his industry and service.

As he was one day travelling out of Jerusalem, about his business, the Prophet *Ahijah*, the Shilonite, met him upon the way; and after a formal salute, took him aside, and there laid hold of the garment he had on, and rent it into twelve pieces, bidding him take ten of them to himself, and delivering to him the will of God in these words:

God is resolved to tear the government from Solomon; and for his promise sake, to give him the two contiguous tribes to the son of Solomon, and the other ten to you, as a just punishment for giving up himself to strange women, and to strange gods; wherefore since you see the ground of his rejection, let Solomon's miserable case be a warning to you, not to do the same things yourself that ruined him. Be just to all men; observe and protect the laws; imitate David's virtues of piety and religion, and you may promise yourself the comfort and enjoyment of David's reward.

Jeroboam was not a little elevated with these words of the Prophet; and being naturally of a very haughty and aspiring spirit, every thing that gratified his ambition, made him turbulent and unquiet.

The prophetical prediction rested upon his mind; and the first thing he did, after he came to the army, was to tamper with the people against their sovereign, and to set up for himself.

Solomon was no stranger to the malice of his designs; and there was a train laid to surprize him, and dispatch him; but the plot was discovered, and Jeroboam escaped to *Shishak*, the king of Egypt, where he waited the death of Solomon, for a fair opportunity to revive his pretensions.

CHAP. IV.

DEATH OF SOLOMON. REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES FROM THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO REHOBOAM, HIS SON AND SUCCESSOR. THEY DECLARE FOR JEROBOAM, WHO SEDUCES THEM TO IDOLATRY. AWFUL DISPLAY OF THE DIVINE VENGEANCE AGAINST WILFUL DISOBEDIENCE, IN GOD'S DISPENSATIONS TOWARD WICKED KINGS, AND A PERVERSE PEOPLE. DEATH OF REHOBOAM. PREDICTION OF THE RUIN OF JEROBOAM, AND HIS WHOLE FAMILY. EXACT FULFILMENT OF THAT PROPHECY.

SOON after this special revelation of the divine mind and will to Jeroboam, Solomon the renowned king of Israel paid the debt of nature, having reigned over that mighty people forty years *.

He was undoubtedly the wisest and riches prince that ever existed, and might have reigned the happiest, if his inordinate attachment to women had not hurried him into a commission of such enormities in the sight of God, as entailed misery on himself, and were the source of numberless misfortunes to the Israelites, as will appear in the sequel of this history.

Solomon being deceased, and *Rehoboam* his son succeeding in course to the throne, some of the grandees sent immediately into Egypt, to inform Jeroboam, of the event, and to recall him.

Upon this notice he repaired to Shechem, and Rehoboam proposed to call an assembly, and enter upon the government by the common declaration and consent of the people.

Upon this occasion divers of the people and leading men, together with Jeroboam, went to Rehoboam, and addressed him by way of advice and respect, representing to him, that his father had laid heavy burdens upon his subjects, and that they were in hopes that they should find him easier; as it was to his interest and security, to make himself beloved rather than feared.

They humbly recommended this to his consideration; and Rehoboam took three days time to consider of it.

The delay of his answer gave them some jealousy what would be the result, especially in a case, as they understood it so easily, and so necessary to be resolved immediately, and so well becoming the years and circumstances of a young prince.

However, as he declined giving them a positive answer, they still entertained some hopes of his compliance.

In consequence of this general application Rehoboam advised with his father's friends and counsellors what answer to return them, being both well affected to the public, as well as these, respected by them, advised him by all means to treat them with

* The account *Josephus* gives of Solomon's reign, wherein he lengthens it to eighty years, is most certainly false, as having the addition of forty years, not warranted by any authority of scripture, which tells us that he came to the crown when young, and that he reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel but forty years.

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courtesy and condescension, assuring him that he would gain much more upon them by a popular freedom, than by standing to the formalites of majesty and state; there being no such tie upon the hearts of the people, as affability and humility in the prince.

Nothing could have been said more to the purpose in general, or more especially to his purpose in particular, having a kingdom in his view.

But his understanding was perverted by a judicial infatuation, to such a degree, that he rejected their counsel, formed a cabal of his own humour and years, told them what had passed, and demanded their opinion upon the whole affair.

They took the point into debate; and whether for want of experience and foresight, or that God had blinded them, they came all to this agreement upon the question:

Rehoboam was to tell them, *That since they complained of his predeceſſor, they ſhould find his little finger heavier than his father's loins. If they thought themſelves ill uſed formerly, they muſt expect greater ſeverity now; and that if his father chaſtiſed them with whips, he himſelf was reſolved to chaſtiſe them with ſcorpions.*

The king was so delighted with this proud, insulting answer, that upon the third day, when the people were gathered together in the greatest anxiety imaginable, betwixt hope and fear of the doom they were to receive.

The king appeared, and rejecting the opinion of his father's counsellors, gave the people for answer, the very words that the young men had put in his mouth; the Providence of God having so ordered it, that the prophecy of the prophet Ahijah might be fulfilled.

These words were no less terrible in the hearing, than the dreadful things they threatened would have been in the execution; insomuch that they all cried out in a rage, as with one voice; *What have we to do with the houſe of David? Let him take to himſelf the temple that his father built.*

And the uproar looked like a prelude to a general revolt. The sedition was so violent, that Hadoram, one of the king's officers in the treasury, being sent out to pacify them, by laying the blame upon the intemperate zeal of some hot-headed young men, the people stoned him to death, without so much as hearing him.

Rehoboam looked upon this violence to be levelled at him, rather than his officer, (nor was his conjecture without ground,) so that he presently mounted his chariot, and posted away to Jerusalem, to avoid the fury of the mutineers.

The tribes of Judah and Benjamin, as one man stuck to him, and proclaimed him for their king; but the rest of the people went over to Jeroboam; and from that day forward, revolted from their allegiance, to the house of David.

Such was Rehoboam's indignation at the thoughts of this revolt, that he summoned a full convention of the two tribes that stood firm to their allegiance, and drew out one hundred and eighty thousand soldiers, proposing to himself, with this body of men,

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to reduce the other ten tribes to their duty by force.

While he was preparing for this enterprize, he was admonished by a prophet from God, not to engage himself in a civil war, especially where the desertion was in some measure the work of a divine direction.

Having promised these things relative to the defection of the tribes, we shall proceed to relate the consequences, as distinctly as the various subjects will admit of.

Jeroboam built himself a palace at Shechem, which he made his place of residence, and afterwards, for variety's sake, he erected another at Penuel.

As the feast of the tabernacles approached, he thus deliberated with himself on the danger he should incur, by permitting the people to go up to Jerusalem to worship: *If I now suffer my people to go up to Jerusalem, aud leave them at liberty to celebrate that festival, they will be so delighted with the shews and ceremonies of that place, and of the religion, that they will be liable to change their mind, and be returning to their old king again, as well as to their old way which may tend to the extreme hazard, even of my life, as also of my government.*

Now to prevent this, he bethought himself of the following expedient: he caused to be made two golden calves, and two temples to be built, the one at Bethel, and the other at Dan, which is a town situate at the head of the Lesser Jordan.

These images were consecrated in both places; and having convened an assembly of the ten tribes under his command, he harangued them to this purpose:

I need not tell you, my countrymen, that God is every where, and not confined to any certain place; but whereever we are, he hears our prayers, and accepts our worship in one place as well as in another; and therefore I am not at all of opinion for your going up to Jerusalem at this time, to a people that hate you.

It is a long and tedious journey, and all this only for the sake of religion.

He that built that temple was but a man, as every one is here; and the golden calves that I have provided for you, the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, are consecrated, as well as that temple; and so much nearer you, in purpose for the convenience of your worship; where you may pay your duty to God in such manner as best pleaseth him.

As for the Priests and Levites, I shall make such a provision for you, that you shall have no want, either of the tribe of Levi, or of the race of Aaron. Let him that has a mind to enter into the sacerdotal office, intimate himself into the Priesthood, by the sacrifice of a calf, and a ram, according to the institution of Aaron, who was the first of that order, and only qualified for that function.

This was Jeroboam's method of seducing the multitude into an apostacy from the laws of their God, and of their country; and he himself consequently was the capital cause of those calamities that befel the Israelites; such as foreign wars, routs, captivity, and the like.

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The festival of the seventh month was now drawing on, and Jeroboam took a resolution to worship the same way at Bethel that the two tribes did at Jerusalem.

There was an altar erected before the golden calf: he himself personated the high-priest, and went up with his own priests after the manner of the temple worship.

But as he was preparing to put fire to the offering in the sight of all the people, there came out a Prophet from Jerusalem in that very point of time, whose name was *Jadon*. He was sent by God, and being advanced into the middle of the crowd; he addressed himself in the king's hearing to the altar, in words to this purpose:

Altar, altar! Thus saith the Lord, there shall arise one out of the house of Judah, whose name shall be Josiah; who upon thee shall put to death the false prophets, seducers, and impostors of those times, and upon thee shall burn their bones; and to the end that no creature may doubt the truth of this prediction, the authority of it shall be now confirmed by a prodigy.

The altar shall fall to pieces, and the fat of the sacrifices upon it shall be spilt upon the ground.

The king was so inflamed by these words of the Prophet, that he lifted up his hand against him, and commanded aloud, that some-body should lay hold of him. But his arm was immediately so benumbed and blasted, that it was like a dead limb, nor could he draw it back again.

The altar fell to pieces, and the fat of the sacrifice was thrown upon the ground, as the Prophet had foretold.

The king, finding by what spirit the man spoke, and that he was no counterfeit, besought him to pray to God on his behalf, for the restoring of his withered arm; which being done, and the miracle wrought, Jeroboam thankfully acknowledged the benefit of the cure, and earnestly pressed the Prophet to stay and take some refreshment with him; but he excused himself, by alledging an injunction that God had laid upon him, not so much as to taste either bread or wine in that city, nor to return the same way he came.

This solemn and reserved behaviour of the Prophet, confirmed the king in his belief of the reality of his mission from God, and consequently excited his terror, lest his predictions concerning him should be fulfilled.

There was at Bethel a certain false Prophet, that was in Jeroboam's favour, not for the truth, for he was an impostor; but for the uttering such prophecies as he knew were pleasing to his master, and subservient to his own interest.

This man was old; and as he lay upon his bed, his sons brought him news of a famous Prophet that was come to Jerusalem, and what wonders he had done; with the story of Jeroboam's withered arm, and the recovery of it, at the Prophet's intercession to God for him; and how he was now gone back again, and which way he went.

The fame of this stranger created

such a jealousy in the old man, lest he should be supplanted in his master's favour, that he presently ordered his sons to saddle his ass, which being immediately done, the man mounted, and posted with all imaginable expedition to seek after the strange Prophet. He followed him step by step, till he came up with him at last, as he was resting himself under the shadow of a large spreading oak.

After the first salute, the false Prophet desired him to return home with him, and take some refreshment.

The stranger positively refused his invitation, telling him that God had forbidden him either to eat or drink in that city.

But the impious impostor arrogated to himself a power to forgive this deviation from the command of God, and so far prevailed upon Jadon, that he gave credit to his wicked insinuation, accepted of his invitation, and went along with him.

While they were at dinner, and in the freedom of discourse, God appeared to Jadon, and told him, that he would not only punish him for his disobedience, but the very manner of his punishment, which was, that he should be torn to pieces upon the way by a lion, and that his body should not be buried in the sepulchre of his fore-fathers.

It fell out accordingly, and perhaps God ordered it so, for the hardening of Jeroboam's heart, into a disbelief of Jadon, upon so remarkable a miscarriage. For, in his way back to Jerusalem, a lion tore him off his ass, and killed (*a*) him. The ass remaining untouched, and standing still, while the lion laid by the carcass, like a guard to both.

The relation of this disaster being brought to the false prophet by some travellers that passed that way, he appointed his sons, to fetch the body into the city, which being done, he gave it a magnificent burial, charging his sons, whenever he died, to see his own body laid in the same monument. For said he, *whatever this good man has ſpoken concerning the city, the altar, the prieſts, and the falſe prophets, is all true.*

Now when I am dead, and my bones depoſited with his, I am ſafe; for who ſhall know his bones from mine?

As soon as Jadon's funeral rites were finished, the false prophet hastened to Jeroboam, and observing the anxiety of his mind, enquired the cause of such extraordinary dejec-

(*a*) *Killed him.* It has been asserted by those who are too ready to arraign the divine Providence, that the punishment of this Prophet was very inadequate to the crime he had committed, which was of a very trivial nature, and if it merited any punishment at all, it ought to have been much milder than what was really inflicted: but, who art thou, vain man! that darest thus impiously to call in question the justice of thy Maker? this Prophet had sufficient evidence of the truth of his own revelation: had sufficient cause to suſpect some corrupt ends in the Prophet who came to recall him; and had sufficient reason to expect an interposition of the same power that gave him the injunction, to repeal it: his crime therefore was an easy credility, and a compliance with an offer, merely to gratify a petulant appetite, which he well knew was repugnant to a divine command. We have no reason then to say, that his crime was small, or his punishment too severe; but let us learn from hence, not suffer our faith to be perverted by any suggestions, which are made against a revelation, whose authority is divine and incontestible.

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tion, representing the folly of being affected by the words of a madman.

But the king, sensibly affected, demanded of him, what he thought of the prodigy of the altar, and the miraculous loss and recovery of his arm? (relating both the circumstances at length.)

The man, says he, certainly is a man of God, and a true Prophet, or else he could never have done all this.

The other in the mean time did all he could to disguise the truth, with plausible glosses and distinctions.

As to the affair of your hand, says he, addressing himself to the king, it is very probable you had over-wrought yourself, with carrying sacrifices to the altar. The very weariness made it numb at first, perhaps; but after a little rest, you see it came to itself again.

Now, with respect to the altar, it was new built; and not being thoroughly settled, it sunk under the weight of an insupportable burden of sacrifices that were laid upon it.

And as concerning the holy man's end, he observed, that he was killed by a lion; and that there was not the least sign or token of a Prophet in all this.

The king was so corrupted with those insinuations, that from thence forward he had no longer any thought of God or his commands; but, on the contrary, abandoned himself wholly to the love, study and practice of all manner of wickedness; and to such a degree too, that in effect he bid defiance to all that was sacred, working all manner of iniquity with greediness.

Rehoboam, being king all this time of the two tribes before-mentioned, built and fortified several fair and strong cities, as *Bethlehem*, *Etam*, *Tekoa*, *Bethzur*, *Shoco*, *Adullam*, *Gath*, *Mareſhah*, *Ziph*, *Adoraim*, *Lachiſh*; *Azekah*, *Zorah*, *Aijalon*, and *Hebron*, all in the tribe of Judah, beside other towns, in the lot of Benjamin, which he provided with good garrisons and governors, and with corn, oil, and other necessaries in abundance, for their maintenance and defence: beside many thousands of shields and lances.

While Rehoboam continued at Jerusalem, there came up from all parts, great numbers of priests and Levites, and as many of the laity too, as made any conscience of obeying the commandments of the God of Israel, leaving their habitations to attend his solemn worship.

They were all weary of Jeroboam's tyranny, and forcing them to worship his calves, to the dishonour of the true God. The discontent, in fine, was so great, that within the space of three years, the power and interest of Rehoboam was mightily increased.

The king's first wife was his kinswoman, by whom he had three children, and he afterwards married *Maacah*, and the daughter of *Abſalom*, by whom he had *Ahijah*, and she was related to him too. He had several wives beside, and children by them, but none were so dear to him as Maacah. He had eighteen legitimate

legitimate wives, and sixty concubines, by whom he had eight and twenty sons, and sixty daughters. Amongst whom Ahijah, the son of Maacah, was the person he designed for his successor, committing his treasure and strong holds all to his trust.

But it fell out with Rehoboam, as in common with other mortals; prosperity puffed him up, and in time ruined him; for the greater he grew in the world, the more liberty he took to be (*b*) wicked; and not only contemned God, and his holy commandments himself, but influenced the people by his example to the same iniquitous practices. It is natural for subjects to be depraved by the evil example of their superiors; for the virtue or the iniquity of the governor is generally a sort of rule for the people to walk by; or in other words, not to do as they do, is tacitly to condemn their doings: thus it happened to Rehoboam, where the people were wicked and licentious, for fear of displeasing the king.

Such flagrant violations of the divine law, and general depravity in a people who had received so many and signal favours from God, could not fail in meeting with the Divine resentment.

It pleased God therefore to avenge himself upon Rehoboam, by the hand of Shishak the king of Egypt, not by Sesostris, as Herodotus mistakes the matter.

This Shishak, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, marched against him with a vast army. They were reckoned twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horse, and forty hundred thousand foot; the soldiers being most of them Africans and Ethiopians. With this army Shishak broke in upon the Israelites, and took into his protection several of their strong towns, that surrendered of their own accord.

In all these places he left garrisons, and marched immediately up to Jerusalem, where Rehoboam and his people were blocked up in the town.

The king in this streight betook himself to prayer and supplication, for victory over his enemies, but could not prevail for an answer to his satisfaction; and thereupon Shemaiah the prophet told him, for his greater terror, that God threatened to forsake all those that forsake him first. This terrified them all into an acknowledgment of their wickedness, and of God's just judgment upon them for their apostacy and disobedience.

Being now brought to the extremity of (*c*) despair, the prophet told the king once again, that God was pleased

(*b*) *To be wicked.* Foolish and unwise prince to imagine himself secure amidst the most numerous legions, while he rejected that assistance which alone could preserve him, and rendered himself obnoxious to the indignation of that being, by whose sole permission kings reign, and princes decree justice; who can at any time make a land barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

(*c*) *Despair.* An unfeigned sorrow, and hearty contrition for sin, is an effectual method of averting the vengeance of that gracious deity, who delights to save rather than destroy, and is ever ready to forgive the sins of all them that are penitent.

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pleased so far to accept of their humiliation and repentance, that they should not be utterly destroyed and cut off, but only delivered up in subjection and slavery to the Egyptians, that they might learn by experience, whether it was better to serve God or man.

Thus alarmed, Rehoboam delivered up Jerusalem, to Shishak, upon certain conditions; but the conqueror, without any regard to faith, or honour, broke his articles, pillaged the temple, took away all the plate, and treasure, as well appertaining to the sanctuary, as the king, to an inestimable value, without leaving so much as one grain behind him. He carried away the golden shields and bucklers that Solomon had caused to be made, with the golden quivers that David took, and dedicated to the adorning of the temple.

After which Shishak returned to Egypt, with a prodigious booty.*

After the departure of Shishak into Egypt, Rehoboam repaired the loss of the golden (*d*) shields and bucklers, with the same number of brass, and committed the care of them to his proper officers and guards, and then betook himself to a life of retirement, resigning every public concern, fearing lest the continual feuds between Jeroboam and himself, might in the end, prove destructive to him.

He was a weak and arrogant prince, and lost, through his own misconduct, his government and his reputation. He was buried at Jerusalem, among the king's; and his son Abijah succeeded him, in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign over the ten tribes.

Having related the most memorable transactions of the life of Rehoboam, we follow the account of the sacred historian, in presenting an account of God's dealing with Jeroboam, who caused the Israelites to run into most enormous idolatries, and every abominable practice, in the sight of their God and mighty deliverer; a

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And this merciful disposition these Israelites now happily experienced, for he was pleased to accept their sincere humiliation and promise of amendment, and to respite the severest part of that punishment which would otherwise have been inflicted upon them.

* *Herodotus* of *Halicarnassaus* takes notice of this expedition, only mistaking the name, where he speaks of the king of Egypt's march through several other countries, and of subduing the *Palestine-Syria*, without striking a stroke.

Now this can only be understood of the conquest of the country by the Egyptians; for he speaks of several pillars erected and left there, with the images of men cut upon them, with the privy parts of women, as an emblematical way of stigmatizing the men for giving up their country without a blow.

Now this Rehoboam was undoubtedly the king of Israel, that gave all for the asking. He says likewise, that the Ethiopians took up the custom of circumcising from the Egyptians.

It is agreed on all hands, that the Philistines and the Palestine-Syrians had it from thence: and it is as clear, that there are no other people in Palestine-Syria circumcised, but the Israelites. But this is submitted to every person's private determination.

(*d*) *Shields.* This shews to what a low condition the king of Judah was reduced. These shields were a matter of state and grandeur; and therefore it was necessary, if possible, to have them of the same value, that they were before; and as they were carried before the king to the house of the Lord, it seemed likewise to be a matter of religion that their value should not be diminished. Now in making these three hundred shields we are told, three pounds of gold went to one shield: This, at four pounds per ounce, amounts to no more than forty three thousand two hundred pounds; and therefore it was a miserable case, that they were reduced from so much wealth to so much poverty, that neither reasons of state nor religion, could raise so small a sum, on so great an occasion.

conduct which brought on him the just vengeance of heaven.

It happened at this time that Abijah, his son falling sick, he bade his wife put herself in the (e) disguise of a private person, and go to Ahijah the prophet, a man filled with the spirit of prediction, and a person who told him formerly, that he himself should be king. *Go you*, says he, *to this prophet, and ask him if the boy shall recover or no.* She dressed herself according to her husband's order, and went to Shiloh, where Ahijah at that time lived.

As she was upon the way, a voice from heaven spoke to the prophet, (who was now dim-sighted with age) informing him that the wife of Jeroboam was then coming to him; and of her business, what questions she would ask him, and what he should answer. Upon her coming to the door in the dress of an ordinary guest, the prophet called to her by the name of Jeroboam's wife, and thus addressed her, "Come in, and seek not to disguise yourself; for he that told me who you are, and put the words in my mouth, that I am to say to you, is not to be imposed upon.

"Go therefore to your husband from me, and tell him that thus saith the Lord God; as it was I that raised thee out of a low condition to the dignity of a throne; and cutting off the family of David from the kingdom, gave it to thee: so on the other hand, in return for all these bounties and benefits, thou hast now most ungratefully cast off him that exalted thee, and set up gods of thine own fancy, and of the founder's making, in preference to the creator of Heaven and earth, and in contempt of my majesty and power; wherefore I will now forthwith expunge thee and thy family out of the roll of mankind, give your carcasses to the dogs, and to the fowls of the air, and set up another king over my people that shall not leave one living man of the house of Jeroboam upon the face of the earth: neither shall the very multitude escape the stroke of divine justice for they shall be exterminated out of the good land they were possessed of, and driven away, and dispersed beyond the Euphrates; for being wicked, after their king's example, in adoring his gods, to the contempt of me, and my commandments.

"Make haste therefore to your husband, and tell him as I have told you, as for your child, on your return, you shall find it dead; for the very moment you enter the city, he shall breathe his last. He shall be lamented and buried with the solemnity of a public mourning, as the only person of Jeroboam's family that had any thing good in him."

The woman hastened away terribly alarmed, at what she had heard,

(e) *Disguise.* There might be several very substantial reasons for Jeroboam's desiring his wife to disguise herself on this occasion, but the principal one seems to have been, to conceal from his people, his distrust of the idols he once came to the knowledge of, the consequence might have proved fatal to him.

His policy however, was but shallow, and his infatuation very great, to imagine that the person whom he looked upon as capable to foretel the fate of his son, should not be able to discover his wife, notwithstanding the most artful disguise.

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and bewailing the loss of her son all the way she passed, repaired to her husband, and found the child dead, as the Prophet foretold, and gave the king an account of the terrible tidings he had solemnly recounted.

Notwithstanding the awful predictions from the Prophet of the Lord, the perverse Jeroboam, as if in defiance of the Most High, assembled forces throughout all his dominions, and marched against Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, who was the king of the two tribes in right of his father, being confident of his success, against a prince of so little experience, either in government or arms.

But Abijah was so far from being terrified at this preparation that he raised an army of the two tribes, and advanced with it toward Jeroboam, in a certain place, called Mount *Temarin*, and there encamped and prepared for battle.

His army consisted of four hundred thousand men, and Jeroboam's double that number. The two armies were both drawn up, and ready to engage, when Abijah advanced to a little eminence; and from thence held up his hand to obtain a silence and attention to what he had to say; the sum of which was this:

"You cannot be ignorant of God's promises, that this kingdom should be continued to David and his posterity for many ages.

"Now, this being the case, I cannot but wonder to see my father deserted, Jeroboam, his subject, advanced to his place, and you yourselves in arms against the divine right of government settled by God himself; not content with that neither, unless you can force the right heir out of the small remainder that is left him, when Jeroboam hath already by violence and usurpation engrossed the greater part of the kingdom.

"But he is not long to enjoy the fruit of his wickedness; for God will call him to a severe account for his iniquities, and to put an end to this course of rapine and oppression, which he himself is so far from doing, that he makes it his daily business to continue and enflame a most impious edition; and what was the true ground and reason of this defection? my father never did you any injury, only by the advice of evil counsel, Jeroboam himself being in the bottom of it, he had the misfortune to give you an answer expressed in terms too harsh; upon which you all in great rage abandoned your duty, not only to my father, but to your God, and to his laws, and all things that are sacred.

"You should have weighed matters with allowances for human frailty: you should have considered that my father was a young man, and one that did not set up for an orator: you should have considered him again as the son of Solomon, your royal patron and benefactor.

"Now, these considerations might have atoned, for a few unguarded expressions; and it would have been but reasonable to have borne a litttle with the son, for the father's sake. But these thoughts never came into your heart, nor are they ever like to do,

do, if I may judge by the army that is advancing against us. And what have you to trust to? if in your golden calves, your altars, and your high-places, it is not your religion that you depend upon, but your wickedness. Besides, that you have the laws of God and man to contend withal.

"Piety and justice will overcome you in the conclusion. You manifestly fight against both, in this cause, in fighting against us, who have constantly asserted the worship and the reverence that we owe to the true God. Not a God of wood, or stone, or the imposture of a wicked king upon a credulous multitude; but God the maker of all things, the beginning and the end. Wherefore let me advise you to repent of your past sins and follies, and to betake yourself to sounder counsels for the future: or if you must be contending, let it be for the defence of, and not in opposition to those laws that have made you so great and happy."

While Abijah was thus piously haranguing the multitude. Jeroboam perfidiously sent a detachment to surprize his *(f)* rear, but his stratagem succeeded not; for Abijah perceiving their amazement, exhorted them to rely on the mighty God of Israel, nor fear the power or policy of an idolatrous foe.

These words of their king dissipated their fears, and inspired them with courage and resolution; whereupon, having first invoked the assistance of God Almighty, the priests sounded the charge; at which, with a mighty shout, they attacked the enemy, and charged them so vigorously, that with the help of God, they put them to a total route, and made such a slaughter, as cannot be paralleled in history, sacred or profane.

There was five hundred thousand men slain upon the place, a victory never to be forgotten. Their strongest towns were taken and plundered, Bethel and Ephraim, with their dependancies.

This blow so weakened Jeroboam, that he was never able to make any farther attempt, so long as Abijah was living, who died soon after, in the third year of his reign, and was buried at Jerusalem, in the sepulchre of his ancestors. He left two and twenty sons, and sixteen daughters, all which he had by fourteen women.

Asa his son succeeded him, whose mother's name was Maacha; and under his government the Israelites enjoyed a ten year's peace.

This is the substance of what is recorded in sacred history concerning Abijah, who was soon followed in the path of mortality by Jeroboam, the king of the ten tribes, in the second years of the reign of Asa, and the twenty-second of his own.

His son Nadab who succeeded him,

(f) His Rear. Though Jeroboam did not attempt to answer the speech of Abijah, yet he was certainly touched with it; and being fearful that it might have such an effect upon his troops as to make them decline the battle had they been regularly led on to the charge, he had recourse to stratagem, and endeavoured to compass that by artifice, which he was apprehensive of failing in, from the use of fair and honourable methods.

lived

lived in a kind of competition for profaneness and impiety, with the character of his father, and reigned only two years; in which time he led out an army against Gibbethon, a city of the Philistines, being possessed with an opinion, that he might take it by a siege; but in the mean time he was cut off by the treachery of a familiar friend, whose name was Baasha, who seized upon the government, and destroyed the whole family; which verified the words of the prophet, *that the dogs should eat him, of Jeroboam's stock, that died in the city, and the fowls of the air should eat him that died in the field.*

This was the end of Jeroboam and his family, for their apostacy from the Lord their Maker.

CHAP. V.

AMIABLE CHARACTER OF KING ASA. IS PROSPERED BY GOD IN HIS MILITARY UNDERTAKING'S. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON BAASHA, KING OF ISRAEL. ZIMRI'S CONSPIRACY AGAINST HIS SON AND SUCCESSOR. WICKED AHAB SUCCEEDS TO THE THRONE OF ISRAEL. HIS RUIN FORETOLD BY A PROPHET. NABOTH SLAIN AT THE INSTANCE OF JEZEBEL. THE PROPHET AGAIN PREDICTS THE DESTRUCTION OF AHAB, WHOSE REPENTANCE RESPITES PART OF THE VENGEANCE, TILL THE DAYS OF HIS SON.

KING *Asa*, possessed with a holy awe of the majesty of the great God, the mighty deliverer of Israel, acted in strict conformity to his holy will, and was a shining example of piety and justice to all his subjects.

He rectified all that he found amiss in his government, purged his dominions from all manner of idolatry and foreign abominations.

He had a select body of men armed with lances and shields, to the number of three hundred thousand of the tribe of Judah; and of the tribe of Benjamin, he had two hundred and fourscore thousand, with bows and bucklers.

In the tenth year of his reign, Zerah, a king of Ethiopia, marched against him with an army of nine hundred thousand foot, one hundred thousand horse, and three hundred chariots.

When he was advanced as far as Mareshah, a city in the dependency of Judah, Asa went out to meet him, and ranged his army not far from the city, in a certain valley called Zephathah.

Upon the sight of so prodigious a multitude, Asa called out to God for his assistance, that he would vouchsafe to prosper his arms, and give him victory over so formidable an enemy; for it was wholly in a dependence upon his divine goodness, that he had now undertaken this enterprize; concluding with an ejaculation, that he wholly resigned himself to his blessed will, whose power was more than sufficient, to supply the want either of strength or number.

Upon this prayer of Asa's, God was pleased to encourage him with a token and assurance of victory.

In the divine strength, Asa charged the enemy with such bravery, that with great slaughter he pursued them to the plain of Gerar; and their desisting

sisting from the pursuit, he rifled Gerar itself, and likewise the enemy's camp; from which he took a vast booty in gold, camels, flocks, and herds.

Upon gaining this mighty victory, through the goodness of divine Providence, the king returned with his army to Jerusalem, laden with spoil.

On their return home, Asa was met by the prophet Azariah, who thus addressed him with all the people.

"God hath been pleased to bless you with this glorious victory, in consideration of your justice, your piety, and obedience to his will and commandments; and if you go on, as you have begun, you may expect the same providential advantages, in all your affairs for the time to come.

"But if ever you depart from the precepts of your God, you will find in all respects the contrary, and that the time will come, wherein there shall not be a true prophet among you, nor a priest answerable to the dignity of his function.

"Your cities shall be laid level with the ground; your subjects scattered like vagabonds over the earth, without any seat or habitation that they can call their own. Wherefore let me advise you, while you have time, to apply yourselves to the study and practice of the good and acceptable pleasure of the Lord. And finally to join with thanksgiving in the acknowledgment and enjoyment of the blessing of God's favour."

These words of the prophet did greatly rejoice the hearts, both of the king and people, who thereupon attended to the advice of the prophet, carefully observing every ordinance and precept of the Lord their God. And the king, gavé a full and express order for the utter demolition of all idols, through Judea and Benjamin, and the cities he had conquered, as well as repaired the altar and temple of the only true God.

Having thus considered the character and administration of Asa, king of the two tribes, we proceeded to Baasha, king of the Israelites; who, when he had killed Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, seized his kingdom.

This prince whose palace was in Tirzah, in all sorts of lewdness and impiety; he went beyond either Jeroboam or his son. A tyrannical oppressor of his people, and of a stubborn and contumacious spirit toward God himself; insomuch that the word of the Lord came to Jehu the prophet, commanding him to tell Baasha, "That God had fully determined to root out him and his family from off the earth, as he had done Jeroboam before him, for his ingratitude to that power and goodnes that raised him to the throne, and for tyranny and impiety in the exercise of his government, without any regard to righteousness or justice; two virtues that are above all others the most acceptable to God, and profitable to the people.

"Also informing him farther, that since he thought fit to make Jeroboam his example, for all manner of iniquity, it was but reasonable that he should resemble him, in his misery and punishment."

Baasha,

Baasha, after these awful denunciations, obstinately persisted, as if resolved to affront his Maker, and as if the prophet had rather promised him a reward for his wickedness, than threatened him with so dreadful a vengeance, striving daily to exceed in impiety and profaneness, heaping sins upon sins, without any care or thought how to avert the judgment, and reconcile himself to God; nay, without the least disposition towards amendment or repentance. In the conclusion, he marched with an army to Ramah, a place of some note, about forty furlongs, or five English miles from Jerusalem. He took it, and fortified it with an intent to make it the seat of the war, as a commodious station for the advantage of many inroads into the dominions of Asa.

Now Asa was not without some apprehension of his design; and reflecting with himself, how great danger the neighbourhood of so powerful an army might bring upon his country, he dispatched embassadors, to the king of Damascus, with money and presents, inviting him over to his alliance, out of respect to the former friendship that had subsisted betwixt those two families.

The king willingly received the money and the presents; broke off with Baasha, entered into a league with Asa, and sent an army soon after into the territory of Baasha, fell upon his towns and strong holds, burning some, and rifling others; as Ijon, Dan and Abel-beth-maachah.

Upon the news of this incursion, the king of the Israelites quitted Ramah, and proceeded nearer home; but Asa erected two strong towns there, out of the materials that Baasha had left behind him; calling the one Geba, and the other Mizpah.

This was the last of Baasha's military adventures; for he was cut off by Creon, and buried in the city of Arsanes, and his son Elah succeeded him; he himself being afterwards treacherously slain by Zimri, the master of one division of his horse, in the second year of his reign, as he was drinking with Arza, the steward of his house, a troop of horse breaking in upon him, in the absence of his guards and officers, who were then abroad at the siege of Gibbethon, a city of the Philistines.

Zimri, after this exploit, advanced himself from master of the horse, to the throne; and according to the prediction of Jehu, totally extinguished the race of Baasha, which was utterly rooted out for their wickedness, after the method of the destruction that befel Jeroboam.

The news of the king's death coming to Gibbethon, when the army was before the town, and that Zimri, the assassin, had taken the government upon himself; the army chose Omri the captain of the guards for the king, who raised the siege, and immediately attacked Tirzah, and took it by storm.

Zimri finding the city without a guard, withdraws himself into a private apartment in the palace, set fire to it, and burns himself and the house together, in the seventh day of his reign.

All things were now in confusion, and

and the people immediately divided into two factions; the one for Tibni, and the other for Omri; but the latter carried it; for Tibni was slain, and Omri had the whole government to himself.

This was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Asa; and Omri governed twelves years, six at Tirzah, and the rest at Shemer, which the Greeks call Samaria. He gave it the name of Samaria from the man's name that sold the mountain, whereupon it was built.

He differed little from the former kings; for they all made it their business to alienate the people's hearts from the love and service of God, by the repeated practices of every abomination; wherefore God, in his wrath, made use of them successively for the destruction of one another, till, in the end, the whole race was extinct.

This prince died at *Samaria*, and *Ahab* his son reigned in his stead.

In the course of this history, the wisdom and justice of an all-seeing, all-wise God, are manifestly displayed in discovering the sins of the wicked, and obedience of the righteous; and also in the punishment of the former, and reward of the latter; for the kings of the Israelites were in a short time cut off, with their whole families, by the hands of one another; only *Asa*, king of Jerusalem, and of the two tribes, lived happily, and in the favour of God, to a great age, in consideration of his piety and justice; and after a reign of one and forty years, departed this life with comfort.

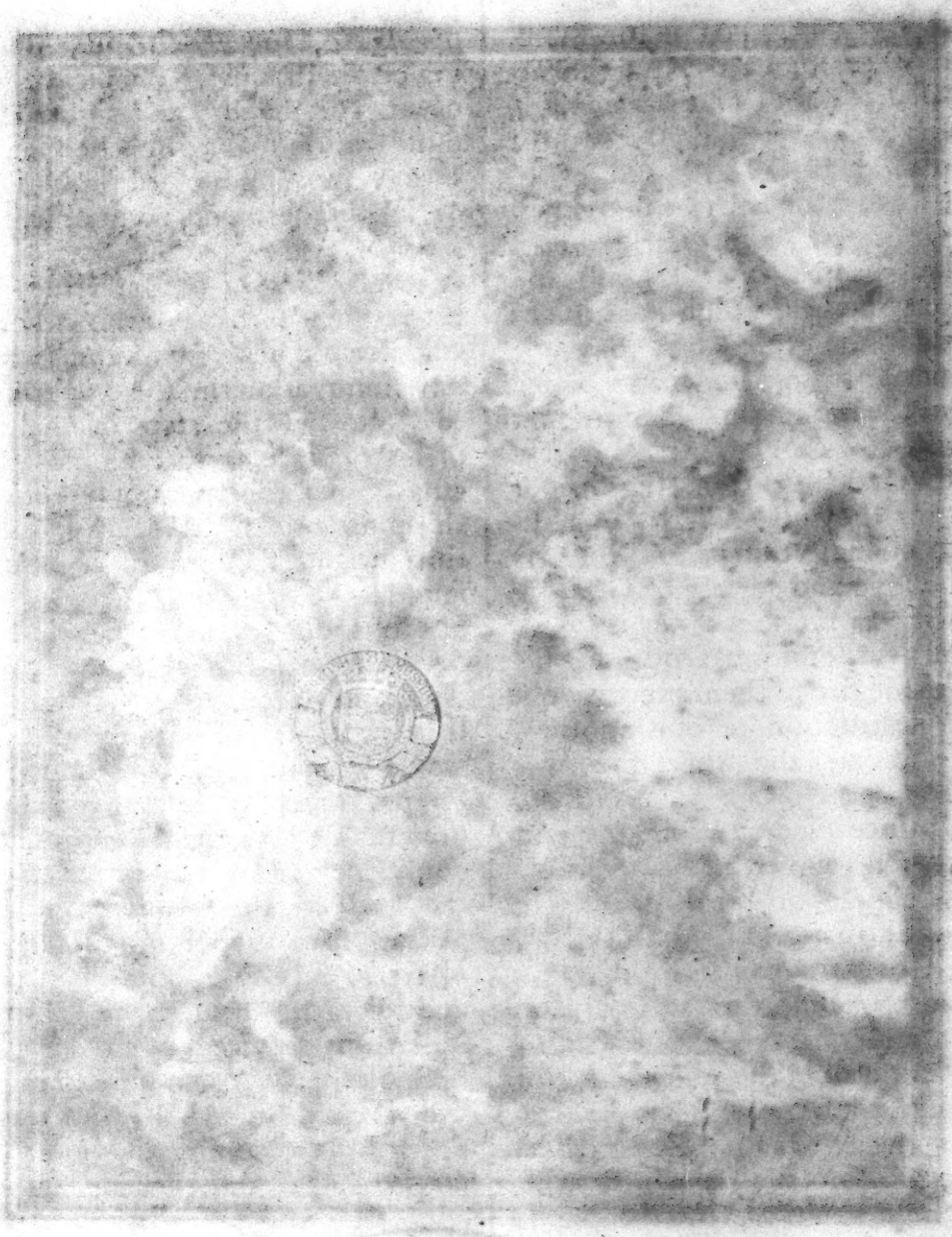
His son *Jehoshaphat*, that he had by *Abida*, succeeded him, imitated his father in a pious obedience to the divine commands, and righteous administration towards his people, proposing the conduct of holy David, as his highest and invariable example.

Ahab, king of the Israelites, fixed his residence at Samaria, where he ruled two and twenty years, without any innovation in the government. He followed the steps of the worst of his predecessors, and most particularly of Jeroboam, not only in worshipping golden calves, but in multiplying all manner of heinous offences.

He took to wife *Jezebel*, the daughter of *Ethbaal*, the king of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, who drew him over to the idolatry of her country. She was a woman of a rash enterprizing temper, and of so impetuous and ungovernable a spirit, that she had the confidence to erect a temple to *Baal*, the god of the *Tyrians*; to plant groves for superstition, of all sorts of trees, and to appoint her priests and false prophets expresly for that idolatrous service.

Such persons and practices were well-pleasing to Ahab, who was disposed for the commission of any heinous offence, and exceeded in wickedness all his predecessors. There came to Ahab, about that time, a certain Prophet, whose name was *Elijah* a Tishbite, and born in the city of *Gilead*. His message was to tell the king, that from the time of his going away, there should not be one drop of rain, or so much as the least

sign



ELIJAH

sign of a dew in that province, till his return; enforcing his prediction with a strong affirmation that it should be so.

As soon as he had delivered his message he went away to the southward, till he came to a torrent, where he might supply himself with water, and there he stopped for the present; the ravens, time after time, bringing him a supply of meat.

The drought continuing and encreasing, the channel was dried up: whereupon God warned the Prophet to remove to *Zarephath*, which is a town betwixt Tyre and Sidon; a voice from Heaven foretelling him, that he should find a widow woman there, who would feed and provide for him.

He followed his order, and being come almost to the end of his journey, saw a poor woman gathering sticks, not far from the town. This woman he understood, by a divine impulse, was to be his nurse; so he called to her to give him a little water to drink; and as she was going to fetch it, he spoke to her again to bring him a little bread too. The woman solemnly protested to him, that she had nothing in the house, but one handful of meal, and a little oil, and that she was now getting a few sticks for a fire to bake a cake for herself and her son; and when that was eaten, they must even starve, it being her all.

But the Prophet encouraged her with these words; *Go thy ways with a good heart, and hope for better things, and bring me a piece of it when it is ready; for I do assure thee, that when we have all eaten our fill, thy barrel shall never be without meal, nor thy cruise without oil, till God shall send rain upon the earth.*

The woman did as the Prophet bad her, and found his words to be true; for they had all three sustenance sufficient, and the provision was still recruited again as it wasted, till this miserable drought was over.*

About this time the woman's son of the house fell desperately sick: and the mother, in a passionate rage, for the loss of her boy, laid the blame upon the Prophet, exclaiming, *This man, that I have entertained, hath discovered my sins, and now brought this judgment upon me.*

The child being absolutely given over for dead, the Prophet bade the woman comfort herself, and deliver up her son into his arms, with an assurance that he would suddenly restore him to her alive again. He took him up, and carried him into his chamber, laid him upon his bed, and offered up this prayer to God for him: *O Lord be pleased in thy infinite goodness, to restore this innocent creature to life again.*

* *Menander* speaks of it in the history of *Ithobal*, a king of the *Tyrians*. "In his time, says he, there was "an extreme drought for want of rain, that lasted from "the month of *Hyperberetæus*, till the same month again "next year."

"There were prayers indeed put up for the averting "of the judgment, which were followed with mighty "claps of thunder."

There is nothing contributes more towards vindicating the sacred scriptures from the insults of deists, than a perfect knowledge of ancient history, and the above quotation from *Menander*, overthrows all *Bolingbroke's* arguments.

God was pleased upon Elijah's supplication, beyond all thought or expectation to restore the child to life again, that the poor woman might not have any misfortune to complain of, while the prophet was in her family. The child, upon this prayer, was revived, and the woman with great thankfulness to the Prophet, found herself now fully convinced, that he was authorised and directed by the Spirit of God.

The Prophet, soon after this, by the commandment of God, was sent to Ahab, to tell him that there should suddenly be rain. The famine having prevailed so long throughout the country, and there was so general a scarcity of all necessaries of life, that not only the people were ready to starve for want of bread, but the very cattle also, for want of forage; so parching was the drought.

In this distress the king sent for *Obadiah*, the overseer of his stables and grounds, and commanded him to search every where about the brooks and rivers for grass for his horses and herds; charging him by all means to get Elijah the Prophet to him, whom they had long sought most earnestly. Having delivered this charge, Ahab proceeded one way and Obadiah another, in quest of the Prophet.

Now Obadiah was a good and holy man; who at the time when queen *Jezebel* was in the heat of her bloody persecution against the Prophets, concealed and protected a hundred of them in caves, and fed them with bread and water. The king and Obadiah were no sooner parted, but the latter met Elijah upon the way; and finding who he was, by his answering a question proposed to him, did him reverence. The Prophet after a while, desired Obadiah to go to the king, and tell him that he was coming.

Obadiah astonished at the command, and fearful of Ahab's resentment, then expostulated with him, "*What have I done, to be sent on such an errand, to a person that is at this time seeking you to put you to death, and there is no torment you are not to expect when he catches you? But what, when I go to the king, if the spirit that governs you, should carry you another way, and when you are not to be found, my head may lie at stake to answer for you? therefore be not so indifferent in a case where my life is in so much danger. You may assure yourself, I do not want affection for your party, that ran the risque of preserving a hundred of your Prophets from the rage of Jezebel, and to this day maintain them in caves upon my own account.* The Prophet thus banished the fear of pious Obadiah by these words, *Well, fear nothing: but go to the king, upon my solemn oath, and promise that I will come to him.* As soon as Ahab understood that Elijah was there, he mended his pace, and in indignation, advancing toward him, called out; *Are you, at this day the troubler of Israel? Are you the occasion of this drought and famine?*

Elijah told him, that it was Ahab, and his family, and their bringing in foreign and false gods, and the suppressing

pressing of the worship of the true God, that was the cause of all their misery. He then to confirm his declaration, proposed to him this direction; *Give orders for all the people upon Mount Carmel, and let your own and your wife's Prophets be there also, (expressing the very number of them.) Summon likewise the Prophets of your groves, who are about four hundred.* The king summoned them, and they met accordingly; Elijah standing in the midst of the throng, addressed them in this manner:

How long will you stand wavering between two opinions. If you believe ours to be the true and the only God, obey him, and keep his commandments; or if you are rather of opinion for the worshipping of strange gods, adhere to them only. The people making no answer, Elijah proceeded to this challenge. *If you chuse to be certainly assured which worship is the right, here do I stand, a single Prophet on the one side, to defend the cause against the four hundred on the other. I will take an ox and lay it upon a pile of wood, without putting any fire to it; let them do the same thing, and call upon their gods to set their pile in a flame. By this means you will be able to distinguish the true from the false.*

The people were well pleased with the experiment proposed, and Elijah bade Ahab's Prophets take an ox, and call upon their gods by their names, giving them the precedency in offering up the sacrifice. When they had prayed, and called some time upon their idols without any effect, Elijah turned their superstition to ridicule, and bade them cry out louder, intimating their gods might possibly be upon a journey, or asleep. Thus stimulated, they continued their outcries and exclamations, from morning till noon, cutting and lancing their bodies, after their custom of worshipping, and to no manner of purpose.

But when it came to the other's turn to sacrifice, and these fanatical priests were ordered to retire, Elijah spoke to the multitude to draw nearer, and examine every where if they could find any fire that was secretly conveyed for the execution of his proposal. Upon their approach, Elijah took twelve stones to answer the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, and erected an altar out of them, cutting a deep ditch about it. The wood was fitted, and laid upon the altar; the sacrifice upon the pile, and four vessels of spring water cast upon the altar; so that it ran off, and filled the trenches.

When every thing was ready, the Prophet Elijah called upon God, and besought him to shew his power now for the conviction of a mistaken and unbelieving people. While the words were yet between his lips, there fell a fire, as from Heaven, upon the altar, that in the sight of the people consumed the sacrifice, and dried up all the water about the altar, and in the ditch.

The Israelites, upon this prodigy, fell prostrate upon the ground, and agreed in the adoration of one Lord; confessing him to be the great and only true God; and that the rest were

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were only the vain imaginations of weak men.

The four hundred prophets were taken, and put to death by the command of Elijah, who then bade the king to go and take refreshment; for, that rain would soon fall in abundance, without troubling himself any farther.

When the king was gone; Elijah went up to the top of mount Carmel, where he sat down upon the ground, and laying his head upon his knees, ordered his servant to go up to a rock toward the sea, and look about him, if he could see a cloud. He went up again and again, but still saw nothing; at last, after the seventh time, looking about him, he said he saw something blackish in the air, about the size of a man's head. As soon as the Prophet heard that, he sent away immediately to Ahab, to hasten to the city; lest he should be taken in a very great shower; and by the time he was come to the city of Jezreel, the whole air was dark and overcast, and there fell immediately a very heavy rain. The Prophet in the mean time, by the special assistance of God, ran before Ahab's chariot till he came to Jezreel.

When the mighty wonders, that Elijah had performed, and particularly his having caused her prophets to be slain, reached the ears of the haughty Jezebel, she sent him threatening messages, that his life should answer for theirs. Elijah upon these menaces, fled to Beersheba, which is in the farthest part of Judea, and there leaving his servant, went away into the wilderness, where he laid himself down, as a man weary of life, and thus called upon God. *Lord, I am not better than thoſe that are gone before me; and I find no temptations left me to deſire longer life.*

Laying himself down under a tree, he there fell asleep, till somebody awakened him, he knew not by what means, or what cause; but upon raising himself, found meat and drink set before him, upon which he fed heartily, and in the strength of that refreshment he went forward to mount Horeb, the place where God delivered the law to Moses. There was a large convenient cave there, which he entered into, with some thought of taking it up for his habitation. While he was there, the question was put to him, how he came to leave the city, and wander thus in the desart.

He heard the voice distinctly, but whence it came he knew not. His answer was, that upon the killing of the false Prophets, and preaching the doctrine to the people of only one God, and that God only to be worshipped, the queen for this crime threatened to have him put to death.

He was commanded after this, by the same voice, to quit the cavern the next day, and receive his instructions how to govern himself for the future.

The day following, he came out from his retreat; and immediately there was a great earthquake; and after the earthquake, the appearance in the air of a blazing fire, which fire was followed with a little pause of

of silence; and after that, a (*a*) still voice, bidding him fear nothing, for his enemies should not prevail against him; and so commanded him back again, by the way of Damascus, and there to anoint *Hazael*, king of Syria, and *Jehu*, the son of *Nimshi*, king over Israel; and to anoint *Elisha* also, of *Abel-meholah* Prophet in his room; for that God was resolved to root out all the wicked from the land by the strokes of divine justice; and those that escaped the sword of *Jehu*, should fall by that of Hazael.

Elijah returned, according to his order, and found *Elisha*, the son of *Shaphat* plowing, in company, with twelve yoke of oxen. He went to him, and casting his cloak over him, Elisha immediately began to prophesy, quitted his oxen, and followed him, only desiring to take leave of his father and mother before he departed.

This was granted him; and upon his return from his parents, he became thenceforward a disciple and companion to Elijah.

It happened that one *Naboth* of Jezreel had a vineyard near the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria, which lay contiguous to the king's grounds. Ahab had a great desire to enclose this parcel of ground within his own gardens, and often solicited Naboth to have it, either in exchange for some equivalent in another place; or otherwise, for a sum of money.

Naboth excused himself, by alledging, that it being his inheritance, and in so particular a manner the gift of Providence, he preferred it to any other the king could bestow upon him, and that on any terms he did not care to part with it.

This disappointment of his desire, on another man's estate, was as grievous to Ahab, as if he had lost his own: insomuch that he fell melancholy upon it, refusing to bathe as he was accustomed to do, and neglecting his meals.

Jezebel, upon this charge, became very solicitous and inquisitive to know the cause of so wonderful an alteration, that her husband should on a sudden leave off bathing as he used to do, and forsake his food; so that upon her importunity, he told her the story of Naboth, and how contemptuously he had behaved himself; informing her farther, in these words, *I gave him the most courteous words, and in truth treated him, even below the majesty of a king; for which civility I was put off with a flat denial.*

The queen, on the other side, bade him be of good cheer, and give himself no farther uneasiness upon that account, for she would undertake to effect the matter herself, and make Naboth severely suffer for the affront.

(*a*) *Still Voice.* The generality of interpreters have considered this passage, as a figurative description, and with no great impropriety I think, for, after the fire, that is, after the storms, thunders, lightening, and earthquakes, which attended the promulgation of the law: came a still voice, that is, the Gospel, wherein God spoke to us by his son, with the greatest lenity and sweetness, using the most convincing arguments, and the most soft and gentle persuasion.

Upon this, she wrote letters in Ahab's name to the elders and chief men of Jezreel, to this purpose, *That they ſhould proclaim a faſt, call an aſſembly, and aſſign Naboth, upon account of his extraction, a place among the principal men of the people; that they ſhould have two witneſſes ready, who would ſwear any thing, to give evidence againſt him, for ſpeaking blaſphemy againſt God and the king; upon which teſtimony he ſhould ſtand convicted, and receive ſentence to be ſtoned to death by the people.*

Every thing was done according to the queen's direction, and Naboth convicted, sentenced, and stoned to death.

Jezebel instantly upon the news of this success, went to the king, and told him, that Naboth's work was now done, and that he might take possession of the vineyard when he pleased, without putting himself to the expence of purchasing it.

Ahab was so overjoyed at what Jezebel told him, that the first thing he did was to take a journey to his new purchase.

But God sent Elijah to him in his wrath, to charge him with the murder of the owner of that vineyard, and the iniquity of his usurping the possession.

When Ahab saw the Prophet coming toward him, he went to him with a voluntary confession, and a tender of any satisfaction the Prophet should require. This he did to prevent the other's taxing him with the fact.

Elijah told him, *That where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, they ſhould alſo lick the blood of Ahab and Jezebel; and that his whole race ſhould be rooted out for this flagicious cruelty, in taking away the life of an innocent man by falſe accuſation and perjury.*

These words of the Prophet brought Ahab to the sense of a true and sincere repentance. He mortified himself in sackcloth and fasting, going bare-foot, and giving manifestation of a hearty sorrow for his sins; so that God sent the Prophet once again to him with another message, to acquaint him, that in regard to his penitence and humiliation, the judgment denounced should not be executed in his days, but should come to pass in the days of his son.

CHAP. VI.

THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA BY BEN-HADAD. SLAUGHTER OF THE SYRIANS. AHAB DISMISSETH BEN-HADAD. IS REPROVED BY A PROPHET. SEDUCED BY FALSE PROPHETS, AND SLAIN. PREDICTION CONCERNING THE DOGS LICKING UP HIS BLOOD FULFILLED. DIFFERENT CHARACTERS AND REIGNS OF JEHOSHAPHAT AND AHAZIAH.

DURING these transactions, relating to king *Ahab*, *Ben-haded* king of Syria and Damascus, levied a powerful army out of his whole kingdom; and being joined by two and thirty confederate kings, beyond the Euphrates, marched with this mighty armament against Ahab, who did not think it reasonable, upon so vast

vast a disparity in number, to venture a battle in the field; but chose rather to draw his forces, out of the country into strong holds and fortified towns, and to keep themselves upon the defensive.

He made choice of Samaria for his capital, which he resolved to maintain, especially as the place was well fortified by nature and art.

The Syrian brought his army before it, and began in form to make his attack, sending a herald to Ahab at the same time, for licence to dispatch ambassadors to him, with instructions to propose what he should demand.

This was granted, and the ambassadors sent and received, having a commission, as they said, to tell him, that his treasure, his wives, and his children, were at Ben-hadad's mercy; and that if he would acknowledge as much, and permit the other to take what he thought fit out of them, he would instantly quit the siege, and withdraw his army.

Ahab sent the ambassadors back, with this answer, that he himself, and all he had, was at their master's service.

The Syrian, after this demand and return, sent yet another embassy, which was, that upon sending his officers and servants to him next morning, they should have free liberty to search all his own lodgings, with the houses and apartments of all his relations and domesticks, and to take away with them whatever they should deem worthy of their acceptance; and as for the remainder, Ahab might keep to himself.

This message was by no means disagreeable to Ahab, and it afforded him a very plausible pretence for calling a council, in order to debate on measures necessary to be pursued.

Accordingly, when the assembly was convened, he thus addressed them, *I have had two propoſals ſent me from Ben-hadad; the former for an acknowledgment that myſelf, my wives, and children, are all at his mercy; and upon the terms of ſuch a confeſſion, he was to raiſe the ſiege.*

Now, all this I yielded to, as I would give up any part of my own property, for the ſake of the public peace, and the common good of my people; but they are now come to inſiſt upon a general ſurrender, out of a meer captious humour, to pick a quarrel with us.

They began at firſt with my own particular concerns, out of an opinion that ſelf-partiality would cauſe me to heſitate on that point. But I am now to deliver up my country and my people, which they know I will never do. Therefore there muſt be a war.

I am ready and reſolved to act ſolely according to your counſel and approbation.

The counsel vehemently exclaimed against the insolence of this barbarian, and gave their voices unanimously for a war; so that the ambassadors were sent away with this answer, *That the king would yet agree to their firſt demands; but that for the ſecurity and honour of the citizens, he would never conſent to the latter.*

Ben-hadad was so enraged at this answer,

answer, that he sent a third embassy, which was much more peremptory and menacing than the former; *Tell the king, that he values himself upon the strength and security of the walls, but before he is aware, I will cast up works that shall surmount them; and that will be but every soldier a handful of earth to do this business*, intimating thereby the incredible number of his people.

To this Ahab, replied, *that men of honour were to dispute with their swords, not with their tongues.*

Ben-hadad happened to be at supper, with his two and thirty confederate kings; upon the ambassador's arrival with this answer; and he gave orders the same moment for the siege, and for prosecuting every measure that might conduce to the taking of the town.

Ahab, in the mean time, and his party, were dispirited and hopeless, till a certain Prophet came to him, and dispersed his fears with an assurance from God, that he should prevail against that mighty army. Ahab was desirous to know by what hands this victory should be obtained. The Prophet on enquiry answered, *by the sons of the nobility, and yourself at the head of them, to conduct them, and give your orders.* So the king then called them together to the number of two hundred and thirty-two; and Ahab having information that the Syrian was in the height of his cups and luxury, the gates were thrown open of a sudden, and these young heroes made a sally. The information of this was no sooner brought to Ben-hadad than he forthwith sent out a party toward them with orders, that whether they came to fight or to treat, they should bring them bound to him.

Ahab in the mean time had the rest of his army in readiness within the walls to issue out upon occasion. These great officers sons first engaged with the guards, killed a great many of them, and pursued the rest up to their tents. When the king of Israel found that they succeeded thus far so well, he issued out with the remainder of the army, and furiously charged the Syrians; took them at unawares, and routed them without any difficulty, having only drunken men unarmed to contend with; so that they were forced to flee for their lives; Ben-hadad himself escaping with difficulty, by the swiftness of his horse.

They pursued them a great way, slaying all whom they overtook; and then with a rich booty of gold, silver, and equipages that they took in the tents, and the very chariots and horses of Ben-hadad, they marched back again to the city.

The Prophet however advised the king, after all this, to have an army in readiness to take the field next spring; for Ben-hadad would give occasion for it. So Ahab prepared vigorously for it on the one hand, and Ben-hadad called his friends together on the other, with the remainder of his broken army, to advise, how to proceed.

Ben-hadad's friends were against his fighting any more in the mountains; for the Israelites God, said they was the God of the mountains, but

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if they fought upon the plains, the Israelites would have been worsted. They also advised the discharge of the confederate princes from any further personal service and attendance; only detaining their troops to stay, and be supplied by them with good officers. That in the mean time, their commanders might be levying recruits of horse and foot to fill up their broken companies. The king was well pleased with this advice, and applied himself to put it into execution.

In the beginning of the spring, he marched his army against the Israelites, and pitched his camp in a large plain, not far from the city of Aphek. Ahab in the mean time, with his troops advanced, and drew up just over against him, though by many thousands inferior to the number of the Syrians.

While the armies were drawn up opposite each other, the Prophet came to the Israelites, with an assurance from God, that they should be victorious, and that their enemies should find the God of the mountains to be the God of the vallies also.

The armies continued for six days in the same station, without moving; and upon the seventh day they advanced on both sides in a line, and joined battle.

It was maintained with great obstinacy at the first onset, but when the Syrians found that they were not able to stand the shock any longer, they turned their back, and betook themselves to flight, with the Israelites close at their heels.

Betwixt those that were slain upon the pursuit, and those that perished by misadventure, in the confusion of their flight, by their own chariots and men, some torn to pieces, others trampled to death; the overthrow was very great.

Those that got into Aphek, the only place they had to fly to, were not many, considering so mighty a body of men; and of them about seven and twenty thousand were buried under the ruins of the walls, besides a hundred thousand that were slain in the battle.

Ben-hadad, with some of his trusty officers and servants, got into a cave, and hid himself, where some of those about him extolled the natural humanity and good nature of the Israelites, advised their master to cast himself at Ahab's feet of mercy, confident that upon such an application and submission, it would not be refused him.

The king consented to try the experiment; and thereupon a certain number of his train were immediately dressed up in the habit of supplicants and captives, cloathed in sackcloth, with halters about their necks, according to the custom of the country in such cases, and sent to Ahab, with a commission to tell him, Ben-hadad was the prisoner, and would ever own himself so to be; and that they came in his name only to implore his grace toward him for the saving of his life.

Ahab replied, *I am glad he is safe; and you may assure him, that he shall be as welcome to me, as if he were my own brother.*

The messengers, upon the solemnity of a sacred oath, that no violence should be offered to his person, went away to their master, and brought him out to the king of Israel, who was at that time in his chariot. As soon as the prisoner had made his obeisance, Ahab bowed himself to receive him, taking him up to him with his right hand, and kissing him, giving him his faith, and also his honour for his absolute security and freedom.

Ben-hadad, on the other side, returned large acknowledgments, with repeated protestations, that this generosity and goodness should never be forgotten; and in the mean time, he would restore again to the Israelites, all the cities, and lands that had been taken from them, and that Ahab should be as free at Damascus, as ever the other's father had been at Samaria.

Upon this they proceeded to the signing and sealing of a league, and the reciprocal interchange of oaths for the performance of covenants: and Ben-hadad was dismissed, not without magnificent presents.

After this victory over the Syrians, a certain Prophet, whose name was Micaiah, came to an Israelite, and bade him strike him over the head; telling him withal, that it was God's will to have it so; but the man refusing to do it, the Prophet told him, he should pay dear for his disobedience; for he should be devoured by a lion.

This accordingly happened; and the Prophet, with the same words, went afterwards to another, who immediately gave him a blow on the top of his head, that drew blood of him. Upon this he bound up his head, and went to the king with this story, that he was a soldier, and a certain officer had delivered him a prisoner to keep, who had made his escape, and he himself was now forced to fly for it, for fear the officers that committed him to his custody should put him to extremities for letting him go.

Well, says Ahab, and he would serve you but right neither. Upon which words the Prophet unbound his head, to give Ahab to understand that he that told him this story was Micaiah.

He made use of this artful circumlocution to fasten the deeper impression on him; informing him in the end, that God would call him to a severe account, for permitting so impious and blasphemous a wretch as Ben-hadad to go, when he had him in his power; and assuring him, that the time would come, when this very man, that he had now spared, should be the death of himself, and the destruction of his army. Ahab was so incensed at this Prophet's faithful discharge of his commission from the Lord, that he ordered him to be imprisoned. However the prediction was attended with terrible apprehensions, and caused him to return home in a state of despondency.

During their transactions relative to that king of Israel; Jehoshaphat king of Jerusalem, a prince of a very different turn of mind from that of the former; had not only fortified with garrisons all the places under his

his dominions, but likewise those in the land of Ephraim, that his grandfather Abijah had taken from Jeroboam, the king of the ten tribes. The king never failed of God's blessing and protection in any of his undertakings; for he was a just and pious man, and not a day passed in which he neglected his duty to God or his people. The integrity of his life and manners acquired him a high reputation among all the neighbouring kings, as appeared by the frequency and elegance of their presents, which not a little contributed to the advancing of his fortune, as well as his fame.

In the third year of his reign, he called together the elders and the priests that were under his jurisdiction, and gave them orders to have commissioners sent from town to town, throughout the kingdom to superintend the worship of God, and to see that Moses's laws might be duly observed. This care for the preservation of their religion, was so great a satisfaction to all his subjects, that there appeared a laudable emulation, to excel in the promoting of so pious a design.

The neighbouring princes held him in such reverence, that they lived in a fair understanding one with another, and in an inviolate peace. The Philistines paid their ordinary tribute with punctuality, and the Arabians their annuity of six hundred and thirty lambs, and the like number of kids. Jehoshaphat also fortified his great towns, and kept in constant pay a well-disciplined army, to be in readiness on every occasion.

Of the tribe of Judah there were three hundred thousand shield-bearers, under the command of Adnab; two hundred thousand under Jehonanan, and of the tribe of Benjamin, two hundred thousand archers, under the same officers.

There was also another captain, whose name was Jehozabad, that commanded a hundred and eighty thousand men, armed with bucklers, beside the soldiers that were dispersed in towns and garrisons.

He married his son Jehoram to the daughter of Ahab, king of the ten tribes: and when he had occasion to go to Samaria, he was most magnificently entertained by Ahab; he and all his army, with corn, wine, flesh, and other provisions.

Upon Ahab's entreaty, he joined with him in a war upon the king of Syria, for the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead, which had been taken, and was detained from him by that prince. Jehoshaphat having an army of his own, not inferior to the other, promised him his assistance, and sent for his troops from Jerusalem to Samaria, where both the kings went out of the town, and each sitting upon his throne, took a review of their forces, and paid the army.

Jehoshaphat, upon this occasion, was of opinion, if any of the Prophets were at hand, to advise with them concerning this expedition against the Syrians, whether or no it were advisable to undertake a war at this time; for there had been three

years

years peace betwixt those two kings, since the Syrian was taken prisoner, and set at liberty.

In consequence, with the counsel of Jehoshaphat, Abab called his Prophets together about him, to the number of about four hundred, and ordered them to enquire, whether or no they should be victorious in this war against Ben-hadad, and carry the city, which was the main point in dispute.

The Prophets were unanimous for the war; the Syrian they declared should be overcome, and made prisoner as before. Jehoshaphat gave no credit to their words, but suspecting them to be false Prophets, asked Ahab what other Prophets there were, that he might have recourse to? He informed him, that there was another indeed, one *Michaiah*, the son of *Emla*, but he hated the man; for he had prophesied ill success to his affairs, and given out that he was to lose his life in this action against the king of Syria, so that he had now imprisoned him on that account.

But Jehoshaphat insisting that he should be consulted, an eunuch then in waiting was dispatched to fetch him. This messenger told Michaiah as they were upon the way together, what the rest of the Prophets said, and how they all agreed, that Ahab should be victorious.

Michaiah honestly replied, *I must not prevaricate with him who made me; but by the grace of God, what message soever he shall think fit to put in my mouth, shall be most faithfully reported to the king.*

Upon the Prophet's arrival, Ahab adjured him to speak the very truth, without addition or diminution. Upon which the Prophet thus declared, *I saw all Israel scattered and flying, and the Syrians pursuing them, as sheep that had no shepherd; by which representation God hath given to understand, that all the rest of the People shall return, and Ahab alone shall fall in the battle.*

The king upon these words, turning to Jehoshaphat, enquired, if he was not convinced, that this man was his enemy?

This occasioned the Prophet to add farther, *The words that I deliver are according to the express direction, and command of God; but you suffer yourself to be flattered by your false Prophets into war, upon the hope of victory, when you yourself are to fall in it.* This firmness and resolution of the Prophet gave the king much concern.

One of the false Prophets, whose name was *Zedekiah*, stood forth upon this occasion, and in contempt of Micaiah, advised the king not to give any heed to what that babler said, as there was not a word of truth in it; and there needed no other proof of his being an impostor, than the prediction of Elijah, who undoubtedly saw further into things to come than he did; for he had foretold. *That in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, (who was stoned to death by his command) in the field of Naboth, dogs should lick the king's blood also.*

Now this is a most palpable falsity in contradiction to the words of a Prophet

prophet of much greater authority than himſelf; for he will have it, that within the compaſs of three days, the king is to fall in the battle; but it ſhall be quickly ſeen by what ſpirit this man ſpeaks. I will ſtrike him upon the ear, and let my hand wither in doing it, as Jeroboam's did upon lifting up his hand againſt Jadon, when he would have had the prophet taken into cuſtody, if what he delivers to you be from heaven. I take it for granted, that you have heard of the circumſtance.

Upon uttering these words he struck the prophet; and Ahab finding no judgment immediately ensued, was hardened in his resolution upon this war, by a fatality, that disposed him to give more credit to false prophets than to true ones, and produced causes that might be followed with suitable events.

Zedekiah then made him horns of iron, and declared, that under the figure of these horns, as signified by God, the pushing, and the breaking of all Syria.

Micaiah, on the other hand, told the false prophet, that in a very short time he should be called to an account for the vanity, and falsity of his pretensions, and be driven from one hiding-place to another, to save himself.

Ahab was so exasperated, that he appointed Amon, the governor of the city, to take him into close custody, and feed him with only bread and water, till he should return.

The dire event, foretold by the faithful Micaiah now approached, the two kings advanced with their troops toward Ramath, and the king of Syria hearing of it, went out to meet them.

It was agreed upon betwixt them, That Ahab should that day disguise himself in a private habit, and the king of Jerusalem appear in his royal robes, the better to evade the fate predicted by the prophet. But the awful stroke reached the king, notwithstanding he thought to evade it, by depriving himself of all his ensigns of royalty, for Ben-hadad gave a strict charge to his officers and commanders to fight, neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel.

The Syrians upon the first attack seeing Jehosophat at the head of the army, immediately pressed upon him, taking him for Ahab, but when they found their error, went off and left him.

They kept the field from morning till night, the one flying, and the other pursuing, but not one drop of blood was spilt; the Syrians only hunting after Ahab, and still not finding him; but in the end, one of Ben-hadad's domesticks, drew an arrow at a venture, that struck the king through the joints of his armour to his very lungs.

Ahab was willing to keep it private, for fear of discouraging his men: he therefore desired his charioteer to carry him a little distant, from the army: for, said he, I am mortally wounded. He, however, kept his chariot till about sun-set, though in great pain and torment,

and then between his agony and weakness, with the loss of blood, he expired.

The night coming on, the Syrians withdrew to their tents; and as soon as they were informed by a herald of Ahab's death, the camp broke up, and every man departed to his own habitation.

The king's body was carried to Samaria, and there interred; and upon washing the blood off the chariot in a fountain near at hand, the prediction of Elijah was verified *; for the dogs licked up the blood; and the place was afterwards made use of for lewd women to bathe in.

He died at Ramath, according to the prophecy of Micaiah; so to the great honour and authority of revelation, the presages of both the prophets were made good, to the eternal shame and confusion of time-serving impostors, that adapt all their predictions to their interest; and instead of telling us from God what we are to believe and do, give us effectually to understand what we are not to believe or do.

Thus died Ahab, king of Israel, by means of a divine appointment, in consequence of his deviation from strict obedience to the divine command; finding too late the folly and weakness of relying upon false and flattering prophets, in opposition to the declaration of those commission'd from above, and Ahaziah his son succeeded him in the government of Israel.

Upon Jehosaphat's returning to Jerusalem, after his joining with Ahab against Ben-hadad, the prophet Jehu met him, and rebuked him, for his espousing the quarrel of so impious and flagitious a wretch as Ahab.

He told him how highly he had offended God by making that alliance: but yet that he was graciously pleased, as his heart was upright before him, to pass over what he had done amiss, and to deliver him out of the hands of his enemies.

Upon this admonition, the king turned himself to God by prayers and sacrifices, appointed a general visitation through all his dominions, with orders for instructing the people in the laws of Moses, and in the religion of their forefathers.

He also appointed magistrates in all cities, and great towns, giving them charge to administer justice to all men indifferently, to the poor as well as the rich, without any respect to profit, favour or affection; and in fine, to discharge their duties as in the sight of the all-seeing God that knew the very thoughts of their hearts.

Having thus settled the administration of affairs, both civil and religious, in the several cities of the two tribes, he returned to Jerusalem, where he constituted judges from amongst the most considerable of the Priests and Levites, enjoyning them

* Upon this occasion I cannot but reflect upon the insuperable necessity of the accomplishment of the divine will, which is not in this world to be avoided, even though it should be foreknown. But we suffer ourselves to be deluded with vain hopes, till we are irrecoverably overwhelmed in the snare.

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to do justice impartially; or if there should arise any controversies of more weight than ordinary, in any of their neighbouring cities, that should be brought to them for judgment, they should not pass sentence without all possible deliberation; for it would be most scandalous and dishonourable to neglect the strictest rules of justice, in a city where God had established his temple, and the king his palace.

He chose the chief magistrates out of the number of his own friends; as Amariah the Priest, and Zebadiah of the house of Judah.

At this time, the Moabites and Ammonites made war upon Jehosaphat, assisted with a mighty army of auxiliary Arabians, and encamped at Engedi, a city near the lake of the Asphaltites, about three hundred furlongs from Jerusalem, and famous for balsam and palm-trees.

When Jehosaphat understood that they had passed the lake, and made inroads into his country, he was much alarmed, and having immediately called an assembly of the states, he stood before the temple, and betook himself to prayers, for God's blessing upon his arms against so powerful an enemy, which was according to the form and practice of his forefathers, upon the first consecration of that holy place; who whenever they found themselves in danger of being over-run by a foreign enemy, caused all the people to meet in full congregation, to implore God's assistance towards the repelling of that violence, and for the maintenance of that inheritance which the Lord in his infinite bounty, had bestowed upon them, that their enemies sought to take away by force.

Jehosaphat mingled his prayers with tears, and the joint supplications of the whole multitude, with their wives and children accompaning them.

As they were in the fervour of their devotion, their started up a certain Prophet in the midst of them, whose name was (*a*) Jahaziel, declaring to the people, that God had heard their prayers, and would fight their battle, in favour of the religion they professed; warning them, upon this, to be in readiness next day to march towards their enemies, whom they should find encamped betwixt Jerusalem and Engedi, at a certain ascent, known by the name of Ziz, (which in Hebrew signifies an eminence); informing them farther, that they should not need strike a stroke, but only stand looking on them, as unconcerned spectators of an action wherein God would fight for them.

After this declaration, both the king and people, fell prostrate upon their faces, gave thanks, and worshipped, the Levites in the mean while accompanying their hymns, with musical instruments.

The king, early next morning,

(*a*) *Jahaziel.* This person seems to have been immediately inspired by God on this occasion, (for we do not read of him as a Prophet either before or after) to comfort the people with an assurance of their deliverance; God himself hereby testifying how acceptable their pious king's devout address had been to him.

went

went into the desert, under the city of Tekoa, where he admonished the multitude to put their trust in God, according to the prediction of the Prophet, and that there was no need of ranging themselves in a form of battle, only to set the priests with their trumpets in the first line, and the Levites with their singers, and so move cheerfully forward, with musick and thanksgiving, as upon a day of victory, or deliverance from a common enemy.

They were all highly satisfied with the king's advice, and soon put it in execution: for God struck the Ammonites and their allies with such a panic and consternation, that falling upon one another, that of many thousands of soldiers, there was not one man left alive.

When Jehosaphat came to take a view of the valley where the enemy was encamped, he found it covered with dead bodies. Never was victory gained more entire, or with such ease, insomuch, that Jehosaphat, in a transport of joy, for so unexpected a blessing, gave his soldiers the pillage of the camp, and the spoil of the dead, which was so prodigious, that they were full three days in carrying off their booty.

On the fourth day, all the people gathered together, in a deep craggy valley near *Berachah*, where they praised and blessed God for all the works of his power and mercy.

From hence it was that the valley took its name Berachah, signifying the valley of blessings.

The king led his army from thence to Jerusalem, where he passed several days in sacrifice and feasting. The report of this miraculous victory filled all foreign princes and nations, wherever it came, with such a reverence of the sanctity and piety of Jehosaphat, that they looked upon him as a person for whom God had a particular kindness, and retained the same opinion of him to the end of his days.

Nothing in the history of Jehosaphat can more excite the wonder of the pious reader, than that a prince so eminent for strict obedience to the divine law, and the peculiar manifestations of the divine favour, as that this king should still be attached to the family and interest of Ahab's race, so far as to join with his son Ahaziah, both in war and traffic: for we find that they were jointly concerned in setting out ships for the traffic of *Pontus* and *Trace*.

But the design miscarried to their great expence and detriment; for the vessels were not adapted to those seas; so that whether through ill conduct, or foul weather, they were all cast away, and the project proved abortive, and was never after resumed.

Ahaziah, king of Israel, had his royal palace at Samaria. He was wicked and prophane, and altogether adhered to the principles of his father and mother, and seemed to have had a certain emulation to out-sin Jeroboam himself, the capital seducer of Israel.

In the second year of his reign, the king of the Moabites revolted, and

and absolutely refused to be any longer subject to the tribute he had formerly paid to his father.

Ahaziah being in danger of his life, from a fall from off the battlements into the court-yard of his palace, sent to enquire of the idol God of *Ekron* concerning the event of the malady consequent on the fall.

Upon this occasion the God of Israel commanded the Prophet Elijah to go immediately, meet the messengers, and ask them, whether the Israelites had not a God of their own? and if so, remind them that there was no need of consulting a strange god in the case; and therefore they had best go back to the king, and tell him that he should not recover.

The messengers immediately took their errand from Elijah, and hasted with it to the king, who was surprized at their hasty return. They told him of a man they met, who bade them go no farther, and withal charging them to tell their king in the name of the God of the Israelites, that his illness was mortal.

The king was very earnest with them to describe the man; so they told him, he was a hairy man, with a leathern girdle about him. By this description the king presently concluded this person to be Elijah, and dispatched an officer with fifty soldiers to take him into custody.

The commander finding him upon the top of a mountain, called him down to go with him to the king, and informing him, that if he refused, he must use compulsive measures.

Elijah told him, that to shew him the difference between a true Prophet and a false one, he would now convince him by a prodigy, that he was no impostor.

If I am a man of God, says he, *let fire come down from Heaven, and devour thee, and thy fifty.*

The Prophet had no sooner put the authenticity of his predictions to this test, than a fire descended, and consumed them all. The tidings of this dreadful judgment no sooner reached the king's ear, than enraged he sent another officer, with the same number of men, and upon the same errand. The captain said the same things, used the same menaces, and they were all destroyed after the same manner. After this the king sent a third officer with his party.

This messenger being a person, who seemed to have maintained a due respect for the Prophet of the Lord, addressed him in the following humble manner. *I need not tell you, that I am under command; that I come upon this errand unwilling, as they did likewise who came before me; wherefore I beseech you be pleased out of pity to me, and my soldiers about me, to come down willingly and follow us to the king.*

Elijah was so much moved with the modesty and humility of this officer, that he went down and followed him. When they had brought him into the king's presence, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he freely addressed the king in these words, *Thus saith the Lord, since you have an opinion of me that I am no god, nor able to foretel what will be*

the iſſue of your diſtemper; and that you have rather choſen to ſend to the God of the people of Ekron for your ſatisfaction, know for certain that it will be your death.

In some short time this prophecy was fullfilled; and Ahaziah dying without issue, Jehoram his brother succeeded to the throne of Israel. He was equal to Ahab in a vicious and irreligious course of life; for he delivered himself up whooly to strange Gods, to the scandal and dishonour of the true God, though in other respects he had genius and capacity happily adapted to conduct the important business of state.

About the close of the reign of this prince, Elijah that faithful servant and eminent Prophet of the God of Israel, was translated from the lower earth to the regions of bliss and glory.

Whilst he was dicoursing with Elisha, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses, which separated them, and in a short time Elijah was hurled in a whirlwind from the sight of Elisha into heaven.*

This wonderful exertion of Almighty power was displayed in the preservance of Elisha, in order to strengthen his reliance on that God who had enabled him to perform divine miracles in conformation of the truth of his prophetic mission.

Jehoram now elevated to the throne of his brother Ahaziah, determined to make war upon Mesha king of the Moabites, for refusing to pay the yearly tribute of two hundred thousand unshorn sheep, upon the account of what was formerly paid to his father Ahab. Wherefore he began with levying an army at home, and after that, solicited the assistance of Jehosaphat, (upon the account of his having maintained an alliance with his father) to join him; Jehosaphat not only promised for himself, but undertook likewise to engage the king of Edom, having some tie upon him, in the party.

When Jehoram came to understand how well he was to be supported, he went forthwith to Jerusalem, where be was splendidly received and entertained by the king. Being there in council, the method of the expedition was taken into debate, and it was unanimously agreed for the army to steer their course through the desert of Edom, where the enemy would be least aware of the design. The kings of Jerusalem, Israel, and Edom, therefore put themselves upon their march, according to the resolution of the counsel; and when they had wandered up and down for the space of seven days, they were greatly distressed for want of water, for man and beast, insomuch that both their men and cattle were upon the point of perishing.

Jehoram thus impiously and presumptuously expostulated with God,

* The enemies of revelation have not failed to throw their impious scoffs on this part of sacred writ, as well as that which speaks of the translation of Enoch; because the precise manner of it, is not recounted.

But such would do well to remember, that many of the operations of Omnipotence are beyond the comprehension of finite beings, and that to scan the practicability of things, with respect to that divine attribute, by human reason, is as absurd, as it is impious.

upon

upon that awful occasion, *What have these three kings done, to be delivered up captives to the king of the Moabites, without the hazard of a battle?*

Jehosaphat, on the other hand, as became a pious man, and according to his general practice endeavoured to appease the vehemence of Jehoram, advising him to enquire, if there were a Prophet in the army to ask counsel of God what was to be done under their present circumstances. A servant within hearing, told them that he had seen Elisha the son of Shaphat there, the disciple of Elijah; and upon this information, the three kings, at the persuasion of Jehoshaphat, went and found him out.

When they came to his tent, which was at a little distance from the camp, they asked him what would become of the army for want of water; but Jehoram being more importunate than the rest, the Prophet addressing him, said, *You should have gone to your father's and mother's Prophets for satisfaction, without troubling those of God; they would have resolved you no doubt.*

Jehoram importuned him still, intreating and begging for an answer, if it were but for the saving of so many men's lives that were ready to perish. Elisha swore solemnly to Jehoram, that if it were not for the sake of Jehosaphat, who was a good and a pious man, he should have had no answer from him.

Upon this he ordered a musician to be called, and as he was singing, the Spirit of God came upon the Prophet, who spoke to the kings in this manner, to make several ditches in the channels of the torrent. *You shall see them all flowing with water, without either wind or rain; water sufficient for yourselves and your cattle, to all manner of purposes. Beside that, henceforward you shall never feel any more drought; nor is this all; for God will bless you yet further, for by his grace and help you shall overcome your enemies, and scatter them, and ruin their plantations; lay their country waste, and dam up their rivers and their fountains.*

The day after the Prophet had thus predicted, there came down from Edom three days journey from this place, an impetuous torrent upon a mighty fall of rain, so that there was no longer any want of drink, either for man or beast.

When the king of Moab understood that these three kings were advancing against him by the way of the wilderness he mustered all his forces to meet them upon the borders, lest they might find an opportunity of falling on him by surprize. The two armies were by this time not far from the land of Moab, when the rising sun striking upon the torrent, made the water look so red, that the Moabites took it for blood, vainly imagining, that the three kings had fallen upon one another in a rage for want of water, and that this torrent was a stream of their blood.

In this confidence they went to their king only for permission to rifle the enemy's camp, taking it for granted, that it was abandoned.

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Upon their application, they obtained leave to break in upon the enemy's baggage, and confident of making a large booty advanced without order, and in great haste towards the camp; but they soon reaped the fruits of their rashness and vain boasting; for being charged on all hands in the attempt. Part of them were slain, and the rest so scattered; that with much difficulty they escaped with their lives.

The kings, in the mean time, made an incursion into the land of the Moabites, destroyed their towns and cities, drove away all their cattle, and covered all the turf with the sand and gravel of the torrent; cut down the best of their woods and trees, damed up the springs and fountains, and levelled their walls to the ground; nay, the king himself was forced to take sanctuary in a town, where he was afterwards besieged; and in such danger of losing it by an assault, that he attempted a sally with seven hundred horse upon the enemy's weakest quarter, to break through their body; but failing in his attempt, he was forced into the town again, where he entered upon the most horrid and barbarous action that the uttermost distresss or despair could bring a person to perpetrate.

He took his (*b*) eldest son, the next heir to the government, and sacrificed him to his god upon the walls, in the view of the enemy's army. The kings reflecting upon the force of an abandoned desperation, together with the vicissitude of human affairs, and considering if it were their own case, were softened to such a degree of compassion, that they broke up the siege upon it, and departed.

Jehosaphat after this expedition reigned in peace, but did not long enjoy his crown; for he died at Jerusalem in the sixtieth year of his age, and in the twenty-fifth of his reign; and had in that city a most magnificent burial, as became the imitator of David, the renowned monarch of that state.

(*b*) *Eldeſt Son.* We are assured, not only from Scripture, but from the testimony of several Heathen writers, that in cases of great extremity, it was customary to sacrifice to their gods, whatever was dear to them.

Cæsar, in his Commentaries, tells us, that when the Gauls were afflicted with any grievous diseases, or apprehensive of great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them, because says he, "they imagined their gods could never be appeased, unless one man's life was given for another's." *Grotius* is of opinion, that this king of Moab, in imitation of Abraham, sacrificed his son to the true God, to move the compassion of the kings that were besieging him; but the most probable opinion is, that he offered this costly sacrifice to some false deity, and very likely to Chemosh, which was his national god, and generally thought to be the Sun.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES ATTESTING THE MISSION OF THE PROPHET ELISHA. JEHORAM IS BESIEGED BY BEN-HADAD, WHO RAISES THE SIEGE, AND IS AFTERWARDS STRANGLED BY HAZAEL. FLAGRANT IMPIETIES OF JEHORAM. THE PROPHET ELISHA DENOUNCES DREADFUL JUDGMENTS AGAINST THAT ABANDONED PRINCE.

GOOD king Jehosaphat was succeeded according to his own appointment, by Jehoram his eldest son. He bore the same name with his mother's brother the king of Israel, and the son of Ahab, who was then but newly returned to Samaria from the war with the Moabites, and brought Elisha with him *.

The Prophet Elisha having received notice of a conspiracy against the life of Jehoram, and that Ben-hadad had treacherously planted an ambush to surprize him, he gave the king intelligence of it, with a caution to avoid a certain place, where the Syrians had laid a plot to ensnare him. This precaution kept the king from going a hunting, and disappointed the plot. But Ben-hadad was so enraged when he found his malicious contrivance defeated, that he reviled his domesticks as a set of traitors, threatening them with no less than death itself, for discovering a design that no other persons were privy to but themselves. One of his servants made answer, that he need not accuse his friends and domesticks

* The holy Scriptures makes mention of several memorable passages of that Prophet, which we shall account well worthy our notice of in this history; amongst the rest is the following. The wife of Obadiah, Ahab's steward, applied herself to Elisha, and told him that he was no stranger to the outrageous violence of Jezabel against the prophets, and that her husband concealed and preserved a hundred of them from destruction, and took up money upon his own credit to feed them while they were in the cave; but that her husband being now dead, the creditors threatened to make slaves of her and her children for the debt; wherefore she entreated him for her husband's sake to procure her some present relief: Upon this the Prophet asked her what she had in the house, she replied only a little oil in a cruise.

The Prophet then bade her go borrow as many empty pots, or vessels, of her neighbours, as she could get, and keep her chamber door shut, and put oil into all those vessels: for God would fill them all.

The widow did as she was ordered; and after the distributing of the oil, she came back again to the Prophet, and gave him a particular account of what she had done, who advised her to sell the oil, and discharge the debts; for there would be somewhat remaining, after satisfaction given to the creditors, for the relief of her children. By this means she delivered herself from a troublesome obligation.

of treason, or suspect that any of the party he had sent to intercept the enemy, had betrayed his counsels, while he had Elisha for a spy upon him, who was perpetually prying into his ways and actions, on his master's behalf; who had the faculty of diving into the most secret of his designs.

The king immediately sent his scouts abroad to enquire after Elisha, and learn where he was: and in a short time word was brought him, that he might be found at Dothan. Upon this intelligence he immediately dispatched horsemen and chariots to apprehend him. They went and beset the town by night, so that there was no possibility of coming in or going out; early the next morning, a servant of the Prophet's ran trembling to his master, to acquaint him that the town was beset with a body of the enemy, which were come to apprehend him. Elisha bade him be courageous, nor fear even an army, as his trust and confidence was in the goodness and power of an over-ruling Providence; and prayed to God for some special token of his presence and protection, that might confirm his servant in a confident resignation to his holy will and pleasure.

The Prophet's prayers were heard, and there appeared forthwith, in the sight of the servant, a multitude of horses and chariots round about Elisha, as a guard upon his person. The consideration of this succour, as the servant understood it to be, put him out of all fear of any further danger for his master.

After this vision the Prophet prayed once again that God would cast a mist before the eyes of these people, and strike them with a blindness, that they might not see, so as to discern him from another man. Upon the granting of this request also, Elisha cast himself into the middle of their troops, and passing from one to another, required for what, or for whom they sought.

On their informing him, that they sought for Elisha the Prophet, he assured them, that if they would follow him, he would conduct them to the place where they might apprehend him.

Encouraged by this promise, they followed him without any scruple, till he brought them into Samaria.

Upon their entrance into the city, the prophet bade Jehoram cause the gates to be shut, and the Syrians to be surrounded.

Upon this occasion Elisha offered up a third prayer; which was, that God would restore the Syrians to their sight again; whereupon their eyes were opened; and to their great astonishment and admiration, they found themselves enclosed up in an enemy's town, in the hands, and entirely at the mercy of their adversaries.

While the Syrians were involved in this dilemma, and perplexed concerning the means of extricating themselves, the king proposed to the prophet the putting of them all to death; which he absolutely opposed, as being incompatible with his honour and justice; and only to be allowed in cases of battle. He also observed, that those people were guilty of no act

act of hostility upon his country, and only brought thither by the will and power of God, without any malicious intention, or so much as the bare knowledge of what they did; and therefore gave it as his opinion, that it would redound most to his honour to treat them with hospitality and respect, and then leave them to their discretion.

Jehoram took the prophet's advice, gave them a splendid and liberal entertainment, and so sent them back again unhurt and safe to their master.

At their return, they gave the king so particular an account of this wonderful adventure, that his conscience was struck, upon the hearing of it, with a conviction, that the hand of God was manifestly in this prodigy, and that what the prophet delivered in the name of God, was no other than the dictate of a divine inspiration.

After this time, Ben-hadad never entered into any secret practice against the king of Israel, but resolved to make open war upon him, relying on his great strength and numbers.

Upon this resolution, Ben-hadad raised a mighty army, and marched with his whole force against Jehoram, who finding himself too weak to venture his all upon the event of a field-battle, kept himself within the walls of Samaria, where he had good works and defences. It was a strong place, and Ben-hadad was therefore in some doubt, whether to attempt it by assault, or by famine; however siege was laid to the town, and the garrison were reduced to so miserable a scarcity of provisions, that an ass's head sold for * fourscore pieces of silver, and a † pint and an half of pigeon's dung (for seasoning) for * five pieces.

In this extremity, nothing gave the king so much concern, as an apprehension that some person might betray the place to the enemy, under the force and necessity of an insupportable famine; so that he every day visited the walls, and the guards took care that no spies should enter privately into the town, and had a vigilant eye upon all the motions and practices of the garrison and inhabitants.

As the king was attending his business, there came a woman crying to him for help; and Jehoram supposing she had come to beg of him, turned her off with this angry rebuke, *I have no barns nor wine-presses; and what have I to supply your wants?*

The woman informing him, she did not come to beg his provision, but to implore his justice, and desire that he would do her right in a controversy between her and another woman.

The king asked her, what it was? and she answered to this effect; *A certain neighbour, and myself, that were ready to die for want of food, came to an agreement between our-*

* The pieces here meant, according to the best authors; weighed nine ounces, two penny weights, and twelve grains, and in value amount to two pounds, five shillings, and seven-pence half-penny, English money.

† The word we have here translated a pint and an half, is nearest to that quantity of our measure.

* Five weighed eleven penny-weights, nine grains and an half, and were in value worth two shillings and ten-pence, seven eighths.

selves,

ſelves, having each of us a little male child, to eat our children by turns, merely to preſerve life. Mine was killed and dreſſed yesterday, and ſhe had her part of it; and now I ſhould have part of her child, ſhe breaks her word with me, and has concealed him.

Jehoram, struck with grief and horror, rent his garment, exclaiming, that he never knew what it was to be perfectly miserable, till that instant; and that all this might have been prevented, by a word, if the prophet would have interceded with God for him. But that he would take the forfeit of his life for it; and in that heat dispatched an officer to cut off his head, who immediately set forward upon this commission.

The outrageous displeasure of the king's was no secret to Elisha, who told his disciples, that Jehoram, that son of a murderer, had sent an officer, who, was then upon his way, to take off his head; wherefore (addressing himself to them) do you watch and observe him, and when he comes near the house, be sure to shut the door upon him, and detain him till the king himself shall come up, who hath now changed his mind, and is hastening after as fast as possible to prevent mischief.

They watched as they were directed, shut the door upon the men when they came, and kept them out till Jehoram appeared himself, who made all possible haste, lest he should be too late to countermand the execution of the order, and to save the prophet's life.

When Jehoram came to him, he upbraided the Prophet with inhumanity, in being capable of beholding the extreme distress of so many wretched persons, without once interceding with God for their relief.

The Prophet gave him for answer this promise and assurance, That by the same hour the next day, Samaria should be so abundantly restored with all sorts of necessaries of life, that a measure of fine flour, should be sold publickly in the market for one shekel, and two measures of barley at the same rate.

The king and the court made no doubt of the truth of his predictions, having had so many proofs of their authority and credit; so that they comforted themselves upon the presage, as if it had been a thing already accomplished, and made their present difficulties easy, by the hope of what was to come; but a certain favourite officer of the king, who commanded a third part of the army, thus ludicrously addressed the Prophet, as the king was leaning upon him, in a familiar way, *Eliſha, we may as well believe, that it ſhall rain flour and barley from heaven, as what you have now foretold; for it ſeems to me incredible, even to a degree of impoſſibility.*

The Prophet replied, make no question of it; for you shall see it. But you shall only see it, without enjoying it. Which prediction was made good.

It was a custom among the Samaritans, that no leprous person should be suffered to live within the walls of the city; and at this time there were four lepers, who had their habitations without the gates.

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The famine in the city was so extreme, that there was no provision to be expected from thence; so that whether they went back into the town, or staid where they were, they had certain death before them.

Upon this deliberation they took a resolution of casting themselves upon the enemy. If they spared them, they should live; or if they put them to death, it would be a gentler way of dispatch. They all agreed in this proposal, as the best expedient they could pursue, and so slipt away by night into the enemy's camp.

At this critical moment it pleased God to possess the Syrians with a panic, upon the imaginary noise of horses and armed men breaking in upon them; and with the strength of this apprehension, they all ran in a great consternation to Ben-hadad, and told him that Jehoram's confederate king of Egypt, and of the islands, was just at hand, and within hearing of the march of the army. He gave the more credit to the delusion, as he himself laboured under the same imagination; so that in this consternation the whole army dispersed, and every man betook himself to flight, leaving their horses, carriages, baggage, and their whole treasury in the camp.

When the lepers approached the camp of the Syrians, they heard not the least stir; and advancing still farther, found great plenty of stores and provisions, but the place deserted; so that having eat and drank, they carried off much valuable plunder, without being discovered by the enemy.

They loaded themselves four times, and buried their burdens in a hole they dug for that purpose without the camp. As they might now reasonably conclude the enemy was drawn off, they blamed themselves for not giving Jehoram and the citizens notice of their desertion, upon the first discovery: wherefore they hastened back to Samaria, calling aloud to the watch upon the walls, that the enemy had totally abandoned their camp; and upon this intelligence, being instantly conveyed to the king's guards, Jehoram called a council of his friends and officers, and gave it as his opinion, that it was a stratagem to draw his people into an ambush.

Saying they might perhaps despair of starving us, and, therefore, have recourse to this invention to surprize us. And if they should but draw us out to take possession of the booty, they might make an excursion upon us from their places of retirement, cut our men to pieces, and with great ease make themselves masters of the city.

For these reasons therefore I am for providing against their treachery, and being the more weary for this pretence. I cannot think they are fled away, and deem it very imprudent to venture the main chance upon the credit of this intelligence.

One of the council stood up, and with due respect to the king's proposal, observed, that it was necessary at such a juncture, to send out scouts, as far as Jordan; observing, that if they should happen to be taken, it might serve for a warning to others.

However that they should not expose themselves too much, lest being detected, they frustrated the design of their project.

The king was much of the counsellor's opinion, and sent his scouts immediately for intelligence; who returned soon after with this report, that they had been so far without seeing so much as one enemy; but that they saw arms, corn, and several bundles of things upon the way, from whence they concluded, that the Syrians had thrown them down in order to make their flight the more expeditious.

The king upon this information, sent out his people to plunder Ben-hadad's camp, where they found a rich booty, in gold, silver, horses, and several sorts of beasts; beside an incredible provision of grain.

Having attained so vast a quantity, the people forgot their former scarcity; for two measures of barley were sold for one shekel, and a measure of flour at the same price, according to the prediction of Elisha.

But the officer that commanded the third part of the army, had no benefit from this booty, being posted at the gate, by the king's command, to keep the people in order, that they might not crowd one another to death upon the sally they were to make, he himself was trodden to death in the throng, as a judgment that befel him for his unbelief, in giving so little heed to what Elisha foretold.

Ben-hadad was by this time got safe to Damascus; and when he understood that the alarm of chariots and horsemen, which had excited such fear and confusion throughout his army, arose from an apprehension rather then reality, he looked upon it as a declaration from heaven against him; and the anxiety arising therefrom brought upon him a dangerous sickness.

Elisha then went towards Damascus; and Ben-hadad being informed where he was, sent Hazael, his particular and trusty friend, with a compliment, and magnificent presents to meet him, and enquire whether the king should out-live his disease or not, and what would be the issue of it. Hazael took forty camels, and loaded them with the choicest curiosities that the court or country afforded, advanced with them towards Elisha; meeting him upon the way he saluted him with great reverence, in the name, and by the order of king Ben-hadad, telling him, that he had commission to offer him those presents, and likewise to advise with him about his disease, whether or no he might hope for relief.

The Prophet told Hazael that the king was to die; but charged him to conceal it from his master. This greatly affected Hazael, Elisha weeping, in the contemplation of the miseries the people were to endure after the decease of Ben-hadad; Hazael asked the Prophet what might be the cause of that excessive grief? Elisha thus replied, *I cannot forbear weeping to think of the calamities that you yourself are to bring upon the Israelites. You shall put the best of their men to the sword, burn their walled cities,*

cities, dash their children to death against the stones, and rip up the children out of the bellies of their mothers. Upon Hazael's enquiry, how it was for him to compass all this mischief? The Prophet informed him that he should reign in Syria. Upon this discourse Hazael left him, and returned to his master, with an account that he should recover of his distemper.

On the day following he made the king a visit; and taking his opportunity, strangled him with a wet cloth, and took possession of his palace and government. He was a man of great interest and reputation, with the people of Syria and Damascus; insomuch, that for many successive years the memory of Ben-hadad and of Hazael his successor, was celebrated amongst the Syrians with divine honours, not only for their bounty and generosity in general, but in particular for the magnificence of the temples they erected at Damascus, and the care they took for the honour and ornament of the city. Their images were carried about in procession, as a token of the veneration in which they were universally held.

The death of Ben-hadad set the heart of Jehoram, the king of Israel, much at ease, as it afforded him a suspension from wars, and broils, and the comfort of seeing himself once again in a state of peace. But Jehoram the king of Judah, was no sooner vested with the sovereignty, than he sullied his regal character with the slaughter of his brothers, and his father's friends, and the commission of such outrages, as if he had been upon a competition with the worst of former kings, which should be the wickedest; being prompted by his wife Athaliah, the daughter of Abab, who proved the instrument of his idolatrous defection from the true worship, to the service of strange Gods.

Though God would most certainly stand firm to the promise he made to king David, that he would never utterly extinguish the whole race. Jehoram did all that he could to provoke him to a total extirpation, by a daily course of impieties and abominations.

Edom at this time revolted from Jehoram, and the inhabitants made way to their apostacy by the murdering of their king (who had ever been faithful to Jehosaphat) and by setting up another in his place.

In consequence of this indignity, the king made a speedy incursion by night, with a body of horse, and charioteers into the enemy's quarters, but they could only avenge themselves, by making some depredations on the borders, not daring to make farther progress into the country.

This expedition was so far from striking any sort of terror or apprehension into the deserters, that on the contrary, it served for an encouragement to others to follow the example of their leaders, and to shake off their yoke likewise, Libnah, rebelling also at the same time. Such, in short, was the madness and folly of Jehoram, that he forced the Israelites up to the groves and high places

places of the mountains, and there to worship strange Gods.

He went on for some time in the defiance and contempt of law and religion, and all that could be sacred either in heaven or earth, till in the end there came a menacing letter from the Prophet Elisha to him, to this effect:

That ſince he had audaciouſly and wilfully ſet himſelf up againſt the practice and example of his forefathers, and eſpouſed the impious ſuperſtition of the Iſraelites; and not reſting there neither, had likewiſe debauched the tribe of Judah, and the citizens of Jeruſalem, from the religion of their country, into the Paganiſh ſuperſtitions of idolatry, in making Gods of images; after the example of Ahab's violence upon his people, to force them into theſe abominations.

After the doing of all this, and the polluting his hands in the blood of his own brothers, and other good and righteous men, this judgment was pronounced against him, in the before-mentioned letter.

That his family, and his people, ſhould fall into the hands of a mercileſs enemy, that ſhould neither ſpare women or children. That he himſelf ſhould be tormented with a lingering pain in his bowels, till by little and little, they ſhould rot and fall out.

This was to be the miserable condition that should bring him at last, though too late, to a sense and a sight of his wickedness.

In fine, this, was the substance of the writings that was delivered to Jehoram in the name of Elisha.

CHAP. II.

THE PROPHET'S PREDICTION ACCOMPLISHED IN THE MISERABLE END OF JEHORAM, KING OF JUDAH. EXTIRPATION OF THE FAMILY OF AHAB, BY THE HAND OF JEHU. DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE, DEDICATED TO THE IDOL BAAL. AHAB'S DAUGHTER SEEKS REVENGE UPON THE HOUSE OF DAVID. HER DESIGN FRUSTRATED. AND JUDGMENT FALLS UPON HER OWN HEAD.

SOME time after this, an army of Arabians from the borders of Ethiopia, together with a number of other Barbarians, broke into the kingdom of Jehoram, ravaged the country, rifled the palace, put the king's wife to the sword, and all his children, Ahaziah only excepted, who very narrowly escaped the fury of the enemy.

The king after this public calamity, fell into a disease, which proved according to the Prophet's prediction, a kind of plague in the bowels, which proved mortal, and carried him off in the extremest agony.

The people derided his calamity, inferring from the great degree of his punishment, the aggrevated nature of his crimes, which had incurred the just judgment of an incensed God.

They would neither vouchsafe him a royal funeral, nor a place in his father's monument.

He lived forty years, and reigned eight. And the people of Judah, placed Ahaziah upon the throne of his father.

Jehoram,

Jehoram, king of the Israelites, was in hopes, after the death of Ben-hadad, that he might recover Ramoth-Gilead; and, with that design levied a great army, and sat down before it.

At the siege he received a wound with an arrow from the bow of a Syrian. It was not mortal; yet he was obliged to withdraw to the city of Jezreel for the convenience of the cure, leaving his whole army behind him at the siege of Ramoth, under the command of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, who took the town by force.

Jehoram proposed, upon his recovery, to make war upon the Syrians; and in the mean time Elisha sent one of his disciples, with holy oil, to Ramoth, there to anoint and declare Jehu king, and to do it in the name of God, and by his authority and order.

The prophet gave him some other things in charge also, and commanded him to be as expeditious as he could, making no person privy to his journey.

When he came to the town, he found Jehu sitting with the head officers of the army, as was foretold him by Elisha; he therefore went up to him, and gave him to understand, that he desired to have a short conference with him in private.

Jehu rose up immediately, and the messenger following him into his apartment, and the young man taking out the oil poured it on his head; informing him, That God had chosen him king, for the destruction of the house of Ahab, and to revenge the blood of the prophets, which against all justice was spilt by Jezebel; and that as Jehoram, the son of Nebat, and after him the family of Baasha, were utterly rooted out, and destroyed for their wickedness; so there should be no remainder left of the wicked stock of Ahab.

As soon as he had spoken these words he conveyed himself out of the apartment in haste, and with all imaginable privacy; Jehu returning forthwith to his place among the commanders.

The officers were very desirous of knowing the import of the young man's embassy; declaring that his looks indicated insanity. Jehu to disguise the fact appeared to acquiese in their opinion; however as they persisted in the most earnest enquiry, he told them in plain terms that he came to him with a message from God to pronounce him king.

At these words, the commanders took every man his cloak, and laid them one upon another for Jehu to sit down upon, instead of a throne; and when he had taken his place, they all saluted him king, with acclamations, benedictions, and the sound of horns and trumpets, to congratulate his accession to the throne.

Jehoram was now under the Surgeon's hands at Jezreel for the wound he had received at the siege of Ramoth; and his sister's son Ahaziah was there at the same time to visit him as he lay sick of his wounds; so that Jehu took this opportunity of marching with his army to Jezreel, where he might surprize them both at once; precautioning his soldiers, as a proof of their fidelity to him, neither directly or indirectly to give Je-

horam any knowledge or intimation of the matter.

The soldiers executed their orders with great cheerfulness, possessing themselves of all the passes and avenues of the town, and keeping so strict a guard upon them, that it was morally impossible to convey any intelligence into the place without discovery.

While this was doing, Jehu mounts his chariot, and with a party of choice men advanced with all expedition toward the city.

The king had a scout abroad to observe what people passed that way, and his scout finding Jehu at the head of the troops, posted away immediately to Jehoram with tidings of a body of horse being upon their march.

The king dispatched an horseman, with instructions to go up towards the party, and learn who they were. The messenger went, and did according to his instructions, inquiring also into the state of the army; for the king he said was desirous of knowing.

Jehu admonished him not to be anxious concerning the intent of those preparations, but to fall into the rear and march with them. The man complied, and the scout presently gave the king notice, that his messenger had joined the troops. Jehoram, upon this, sent again the same instructions, and with the very same success; when receiving no satisfaction, he took his chariot himself and Ahaziah the king of Judah along with him, who, being his kinsman, was come there to visit him; as they went out together to meet Jehu, who moved very leisurely, and coming into the field of Naboth, Jehoram asked him concerning the destination of his army when Jehu in this reply, cast some poignant reflections upon the whoredoms and witchcraft of his mother. This caused Jehoram to suspect the security of his situation, and determined to decamp as soon as possible; he therefore told Ahaziah that he was betrayed; and as he was hastening to make his escape, Jehu shot him through the heart with an arrow, so that he dropped from his chariot, and then commanded Bidkar, the captain of a third part of the army, to take the carcase, and cast it out into the field of Naboth, calling to mind what the prophet Elijah had formerly said to his father Ahab; viz. that he and his family were to perish in that place; which he himself had heard as he was sitting in a chariot behind Ahab, an every thing fell out accordingly. Upon the death of Jehoram, Ahaziah apprehending his own life to be in danger, turned off his chariot into a by way, where he thought Jehu would not find him; but following him however to a certain bank, he wounded him with an arrow, which caused him to leave his chariot, and take horse to save himself by flight. He got off to the city of Megiddo, where he soon after died of his wound; from whence he was carried to Jerusalem, and their buried, after he had reigned one year, during which time he had exceeded the abominations of his father.

When Jehu came into Jezreel, Jezabel planted herself in a turret-window,

window, arrayed in a most superb attire, to see his entry. As he passed by her she scoffingly said, *Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?* Jehu, seeing the woman, and hearing these words, called out to her to know who she was, and bid her come down: but on not coming immediately, he commanded the eunuchs that were then about her to cast her down headlong.

They obeyed his order, and the walls were stained with the blood that gushed from her body in the fall. As she lay upon the earth, the horsemen rode over the carcase, and trampled her to death.

After this, Jehu and his friends marched forward to the palace to refresh themselves. When they had been there some time, Jehu ordered Jazabel's servants, out of respect to her quality, to see their mistress buried; reminding them that she was a king's daughter: when they came to look for the body, there was nothing to be found but a piece of the skull, the palms of her hands, and the soles of her feet; the dogs having eat up all the rest.

This circumstance confirmed Jehu more and more in the authenticity of Elijah's prediction, which he had foretold, *that dogs should eat the flesh of Jezabel in the field of Jezreel.*

Ahab had seventy sons, who resided at this time in Samaria, where they were brought up: Jehu wrote two letters thither, one to the governor, and the other to the magistrates of the place, wherein he gave them to understand, that being well provided with horses, men, arms, chariots, and other necessaries for war, beside fortified towns and strong holds, it was incumbent on them, to select from the race of Ahab, a youth of the most amiable qualifications, both natural and acquired, and vest him with the regal dignity, in order to revenge the death of their lord and master, and to try how they stood affected to his interest.

The persons to whom these letters were addressed, read them over with great care and attention, and agreeing upon the whole, that it would not be safe, under their circumstances, to oppose a power which had already been too mighty for two great kings; they resolved to make him an answer as evasive and inconclusive as possible, implying upon the whole, that they owed allegiance to no other prince but him, at whose devotion they should ever thankfully and obediently remain.

Jehu wrote them word back, that if they favoured his interest, they should forthwith send him the heads of all Ahab's sons, as a token and testimony of their readiness to serve him.

The magistrates and the young men's tutors conferred together about it; and, without any scruple of tenderness or compassion, agreed among themselves to cut off all their heads, and send them in baskets to Jezreel.

The king and his friends were at supper when the news was brought him that the heads were come: so he ordered them to be laid in two heaps before the gate, on each side one;

one; and the next morning going out to view them, thus addressed himself to the people, *I had a hand in the death of my maſter, but whoſe doing is all this?* His design was to ſatisfy the people that this rigour toward the house of Ahab was not only according to the will of God, but answerable to what God himself had foretold by the mouth of the Prophet. He destroyed as many of the family of Ahab as he could find, and returned afterward to Samaria.

Falling into company upon the way with several of the kindred of Ahaziah, king of Jerusalem, he asked them whither they were going? They answered, they were going to pay their duty to Jehoram and king Ahaziah, having heard nothing as yet of their death by the hand of Jehu.

There were two and forty of them in number, and Jehu caused them all to be slain. He happened afterward to meet with Jehonadab, his particular friend, and a very just man; who, after the first salutation, highly commended him for his zeal in rooting out the race and family of wicked Ahab, according to the command and appointment of God.

Jehu then invited him into his chariot, to go with him to Samaria; telling him that he should now see he would spare no apostates, but put all the false priests and prophets to the sword, even every man that had seduced the people from the religion of their forefathers, into the idolatrous worship of false Gods; accounting it a matter of joy for a good man, to see the wicked punished according to their deserts.

Jehonadab submitted to the king's pleasure, and waited upon him in his chariot to the city. Jehu, as soon as they came thither, caused ſtrict search to be made for Ahab's relations, and put them all to death as fast as he found them; being resolved that none of Ahab's false Prophets, or profane Priests should escape him, he circumvented them all by ſtratagem.

He appointed the people to meet him in an assembly, telling them, *That if Ahab ſerved Baal a little, Jehu ſhould ſerve him twice as much, for he would worſhip double the number; therefore he would have all the Prieſts and Prophets of Baal to be preſent to a ſingle man; for he had a great ſacrifice to offer to the God of Ahab, whom they called Baal, and it ſhould be death for any Prieſt to abſent himſelf.*

Thus he sent his messengers up and down Israel, to summon the Priests up to Samaria at the appointed day.

Upon their arrival, they had vestments given them, which they put on. So Jehu took Jehonadab with him into the house of Baal, where ſtrict search was made, that there might not be any person there present, more than the servants of Baal, for Jehu would not suffer (as he said) any profane intruder to intermix in the holy worship.

When Jehu found that they were all Baalites, and just entering upon the ceremony, he had fourscore men set ready at the door, that waited only the word of command to break in upon the apostates.

Their orders were to put all the false Prophets to the sword, and to vindicate

vindicate the religion of their ancestors, under this condition and penalty, that whoever should spare the life of but any one of them, his life should answer for the other's.

The word was given, and they executed their commission to the uttermost rigour, for they slew them all to a man, set fire to the palace itself, and so purged the city of those sacrilegious abominations.

This Baal was the Syrian's idol, to whom Ahab dedicated an altar in Samaria, for the sake of Ithobal his father-in-law, king of Tyre and Sidon, and assigned them Priests and Prophets, and other necessaries appertaining to their religion.

Now Jehu abolished the rites and ceremonies of this worship, but permitted the Israelites to go on still in the worship of their golden calves.

This severity against that impious generation was so far pleasing to God, that he signified to him by his Prophet, that his posterity should sit upon the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.

When Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab king of Israel, and the widow of Jehoram king of Judah, came to understand what havock Jehu had made in her father's wicked family, king Jehoram her brother assassinated, her son Ahaziah dead of his wounds, and the whole stock upon the point of being utterly rooted out, she formed a resolution of re-establishing the same procedure upon the house of David, and not to leave so much as one man alive of the family, to pretend to the kingdom of Judah.

This was her determination, nor was it owing to her want of assiduity that it was not executed. For of all the sons of Ahaziah, there was only one that escaped; and the manner of his deliverance was as follows: Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, and the wife of Jehoiada the high priest, coming into the palace, found a male child of about a year old, whose name was Jehoash, among the dead bodies of the sons of Ahaziah, which the nurse had hid there.

She conveyed it away to her own lodgings, and from thence to the temple, where she concealed it, thro' the whole six years of Athaliah's reign over Jerusalem, and the two tribes, and none of her friends or relations were privy to the secret but her own husband.

In the seventh year Jehoiada entered into an association with five captains, to force the government out of Athaliah's hand, and transfer it to the right heir; shewing them the child that was then present.

Their business was now only to interchange an oath of faith and secrecy, and apply themselves to the execution of the design; which they did immediately, but not without great hope of success.

The captains that he had engaged in this enterprize, travelled all over the country with summons to the priests and Levites, and several of the principal men in their tribes, in the high priest's name, to go up to Jerusalem, where Jehoiada told them, that they were now called upon for advice, about the common good of the public; and that he would lay the whole matter before them; but

it must be kept private, and the case not only required secrecy, but help.

Upon this, he gave them their oath of secrecy, and then told them the whole story, withou tany reserve, shewing them the child likewise that he had taken into his care and preserved; and thus addressing them, said,

This child is your king, and a branch of that family, which God had promised and foretold, ſhall never be wanting to supply the throne of David.

Now it is my advice, that you divide yourſelves into three bodies; one third to be upon the guard of the king in the temple; a ſecond third to ſecure the paſſes and avenues that lead to it; and the remainder to guard the open gate that leads to the palace.

As for thoſe that have no arms, let them be in the temple, if they think fit; but let no armed man be admitted there, if he be a prieſt.

Jehoiada gave order also for a select number of Preists and Levites to stand with drawn swords, as a guard about the king's person, and to kill any man that should press into the temple with a weapon about him, in order to secure the life and safety of the king.

They were all pleased with the advice and contrivance of the high-priest, so that the next thing to be done was the putting the project in execution.

Jehoiada, upon this, opened a magazine of armour, that David had long since stored up in the temple, delivering out lances, arrows, and what other military weapons that were there deposited, to the Centurions, Priests and Levites, who planted themselves as a guard upon the temple quite round it; and so strictly beset the doors, that not a person was let in that had no business there.

The child was now produced with a royal crown upon his head; and being anointed with the holy oil according to custom, the high-preist pronounced him king; which solemnity was accompanied with innumerable acclamations, by the people in general.

The clamour of this outcry and proclamation was a terrible surprize. Athaliah, who immediately hasted away with her guards, from the palace to the temple, where she herself was admitted by the priests; but the soldiers that followed her were kept out by the guards that were posted there by Jehoiada for that very purpose.

So soon as she saw the child upon the throne, with a royal crown upon his head, she rent her garments, and called out with a loud voice, treason! treason!

Jehoiada, on the other side, commanded the officer's to seize the woman, and carry her away to the brook of Kidron, and there put her to death, as the temple was not to be polluted with the blood of a sorceress.

Order was likewise given, that if any man should attempt a rescue, they should put him to death. Those who had the charge of this commission, carried her out of the gate by the horse way, and there dispatched her.

As

As soon as this plot against Athliah had taken effect, Jehoiada called all the people and soldiers together into the temple, and administered to them an oath of allegience and fidelity to the king, for the safety and defence of his person, and the honour and preservation of his government.

After this, the king himself took an oath of religious reverence to God, and for the observance of those laws that Moses received from heaven, and transmitted to the people.

The multitude thus wrought into a religious reverence and holy awe of the true God, and filled with just indignation at idolatry and its abettors, hastened in great numbers to the temple of Baal, that Athaliah, in concurrence with her husband Jehoram had erected, in order to ingratiate themselves with Ahab; and destroyed them after they had slain Mattan, an idolatrous priest.

But for the preservation of the holy temple, that was committed to the charge of the priests and Levites, according to the institution of David; Jehoiada appointed two solemn sacrifices to be offered up every day, with incense, according to the direction of the law, appointed porters also out of the number of the Levites, to prevent any pollutions from being privately introduced:

When all things were thus disposed, Jehoash was conducted out of the temple into the palace, by the captains, the governors, and all the people, where being placed a second time upon the throne, and received with repeated acclamations, the people gave themselves up for some days to mirth and feasting, as there was not an individual, but rejoiced at the death of that wicked woman.

Jehoash was seven years of age when he began his reign. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. He was a strict observer of the laws and religion of his country, so long as Jehoiada lived.

When he arrived at years of maturity, he married two wives, with the approbation of the high-priest, had children by them of both sexes, and behaved in every respect becoming a prince.

CHAP. III.

JEHOASH SUCCEEDS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL ON THE DEATH OF JEHU. HIS PIOUS CONDUCT DURING THE LIFE OF JEHOIADA. APOSTACY AFTER HIS DEATH. STONING ZACHARIAH THE PROPHET AT HIS INSTANCE. SIEGE OF JERUSALEM. JEHOASH IS SLAIN. SUCCEEDED BY JEHOAHAZ. THE RUIN OF THE ASSYRIANS FORETOLD. APOSTACY OF AMAZIAH AWFULLY PUNISHED.

IT pleased God in the course of his wise Providence to chastise the Isrelites; and Hazael the Syrian was made the awful instrument of divine vengeance. Accordingly he advanced into their territories, spoiling all before him, and laying waste a great tract of land on the eastward beyond Jordan, particularly in the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasses, and so in Gilead and Bashan; not only burning and pillaging, but puting

ting man, woman, and child to the sword, wherever he came, without mercy; all this was done with little or no opposition from Jehu, being a man that spent his time in a stupid contempt of God's religion and holy laws. Having reigned seven and twenty years over Israel, he died and was buried at Samaria, being succeeded by his son Jehoash.

In the days of Jehoram and Athaliah, and of their sons, the temple was gone to ruin for want of repair, so that Jehoahaz the king of Jerusalem, sent for Jehoiada the high-priest, to give him orders about it. He was commanded to send priests and Levites into all quarters of his dominions, to charge every man at half a silver shekel a head, toward repairing the temple

But notwithstanding this command, there was nothing done toward it at present; for Jehoiada well knew, that the people would not at that time contribute towards such a design. But this king, in the three and twentieth year of his reign, finding so good and needful a work to be totally forgotten and laid aside, he charged the high-priest and the Levites with the care of it once again; blaming them, in some degree, for their former neglect of duty.

This put Jehoiada upon thinking himself how the business might be brought about without any grievance to the people; and in the end he fixed upon this expedient. He caused a wooden chest to be provided, close wrought and locked, with a slit through the cover of it, to receive what pieces of money soever would be put into it. This was to be placed near the altar, and the people invited to shew their good will upon this occasion towards the work in hand, in proportion to the zeal they had to the true religion and God's immediate service.

The multitude was so well pleased with the method, that they brought in gold and silver, as if emulous of exceeding each other in their donations. The chest was every day opened, the money counted, and registered by the clerk of the treasury, and then locked up again by the priest, who had the keeping of the key; and all this was done in the presence of the king.

When they had got treasure enough to begin, the king and the high-priest hired carpenters, masons, and other artificers; procured the largest and choicest timber that could be provided, and went on with the reparations, employed the overplus, (which was very considerable) after the finishing of that work, upon cups, chalices, goblets, and other vessels for holy uses, over and above the oblation of daily sacrifices.

This regularity was exactly observed while Jehoiada lived; but in the hundred and thirtieth year of his age he died; a man of signal probity and justice, and so highly esteemed, as a friend to the house of David, that his body was deposited in the sepulchre of the kings. After his decease Jehoash fell off from his former zeal for religion, and the princes

princes of the people quickly followed his example, valuing themselves upon the contempt of holy things.

Upon this abominable apostacy, both of the king and his ministers, God sent prophets to expostulate and reason with them, and to convince them of their wickedness; but they were so hardened in their iniquity, that neither the example of their forefathers, and their families, that had been cut of and rooted out, for the same contempt, nor the threatenings of the prophets could avail with them; but the king caused Zachariah, the son of the high priest Jehoiada, to be stoned to death in the temple of God, without any regard to the merit and good counsels of his father.

Thus did he treat the servant of the Lord for exhorting both king and people to repentance, and the administration of equal justice; with a premonition of the grievous judgments that would befal them, if they persisted in their iniquity. Zachariah, with his last breath, appealed to God both as his judge, and as his witness, *That the crime he died for was only the giving of good advice, and being the ſon of a father that had deſerved ſo well from the king; and that the death he then ſuffered was but the reward of thoſe ſervices.*

After this the divine vengeance overtook the king himself; for Hazael, the king of Syria, made an inroad into his country, plundered and destroyed Gath, and from thence marched to Jerusalem, where himself had taken sanctuary. He was so affrighted at the approach of the Syrian army, that he compounded for himself and the city, and delivered up all the treasure of the temple, as well as what was dedicated to God, as the gifts of particular kings, to purchase exemption from the danger that then threatened him, and security for the future. Hazael accepted the offer, being a prodigious sum of money, and so raised the siege.

Jehoash, after this fell into a fit of sickness, and the friends of Zachariah took their revenge upon him by surprize, for the murder of the son of the high priest. He was buried at Jerusalem at the age of forty-seven years; and though a man of apparent piety, at his accession to the throne, yet he had fallen from the service of God into every kind of abomination.

Amaziah succeeded Joash, his father, in the government of Judah, and in the three and twentieth year of Joash, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu entered upon the government of Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years; not so much after the example of his father, as after that of the worst of his former predecessors, who lived in open defiance of God and goodness.

The king of Syria, in the mean time had reduced his mighty army to the small number of ten thousand foot, and five hundred horse, overrunning several of the cities, and killing many of his people. This calamity of the Israelites was foretold by Elisha in his prediction to Hazael, when he told him that he should kill his lord, and possess himself of the

government of Syria and Damascus. In this unhappy juncture, Jehoahaz had recourse to God by prayer and supplication, for deliverance from the power and oppression of Hazael.

Upon his humiliation, that gracious God, who not only cherishes the innocent, but pardons the penitent, and chuses rather to correct and reform the wicked, than destroy them, was prevailed upon to deliver him from the burden of a ruinous war, by a timely peace, and to restore his dominions to their former state of happiness and plenty.

After the death of Jehoahaz, Joash his son came to the government of Israel and Samaria, in the seven and thirtieth year of the reign of Joash, king of Judah, this king and the king of Jerusalem being both of a name. He held the government sixteen years, and reigned in the fear of God, and proved as pious and obedient to the divine command, as his father had been wicked and disobedient.

The prophet Elisha was now far advanced in years; and being at this time upon his death bed, Joash made him a visit in his extremity, and out of tenderness to see the good man labouring in his agonies, burst out into tears; calling him the father, the defender and protector of his country; observing that while he lived, the people were secure against all their enemies, even without arms, through the benefit and blessing of his prayers; but that whenever he was taken away, they should be left naked and defenceless, at the mercy of the Syrians and other enemies; and that therefore, for his own part, he had infinitely rather leave the world with him, than stay in it without him.

This compassionate softness wrought so far upon the prophet, that to comfort the king, he called for a bow and arrow, laid his hand upon it, and bade him bend it and shoot. He shot thrice, and then gave over; then Elisha told him, that if he had let fly more shafts, he should have ruined and destroyed the whole kingdom of the Syrians; but since he gave it off at a third shot, he must content himself with three several victories over them; wherein he should recover the countries they had taken from his father.

The king went away upon these words; and the prophet expired soon after. He was a man celebrated for his justice, and without all dispute highly in God's favour, as appears by the wonderful things he did, and the miracles that he wrought. They gave him an honorable interment, answerable to the merit of so great a saint.

It happened, after this, that a traveller was killed upon the way, by thieves, and the body thrown into the prophet's monument; which, upon the bare touch of Elisha, was immediately revived; so, that both dead and living, this prophet wrought miracles.

Hazael was now dead, and the kingdom of Syria devolved by hereditary right to his son Ben-hadad, who was overthrown by Joash in three battles; and all that country recovered to the Israelites, which his father

father had wrested from them, according to the prediction of Elisha. Upon the death of Joash, Jeroboam his son entered upon the government.

In the second year of Joash king of Israel, Amaziah came to the government of the tribe of Judah, in the city of Jerusalem. His mother's name was *Jehoaddan*, a native of the place. He had a reverence for justice, even in his youth; and began his administration in revenging the death of his father upon those persons who had treacherously murdered him, under a cloak of friendship. He brought the assasins to publick justice, but spared their children, according to the laws prescribed by Moses, who deemed it unreasonable to punish the children for the iniquity of the fathers.

After this he levied an army of select men from among the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and appointed proper officers over them. Besides this chosen body which consisted of three hundred thousand, he treated with the king of the Israelites for one hundred thousand auxiliaries, at the rate of an hundred talents of silver for their hire, paid down immediately, being fully determined to make war upon the Amalekites, the Edomites, and the Gabilites. As he was just upon the point of marching against them, a man of God advised him by all means to dismiss the Israelites; for they were a wicked generation, and would certainly be destroyed, together with those that joined with them; adding moreover, that he had a sufficient force of his own, with God's assistance, to overcome the enemy.

The king having already parted with his money, was not a little troubled at the thoughts of losing both his pay and his men; yet upon the prophet's council to resign himself wholly to the will of God, under whose protection he should be sure to want nothing, he discharged his auxiliaries, observing, that he frankly bestowed that treasure upon them as a bounty, which they had received only as hire.

Immediately upon parting with his mercenaries, he advanced with his own troops against the combined enemies, whom he overcame, cut off ten thousand of them in one battle, and carried away ten thousand more to the top of a great rock, that over-looks Arabia, where they were all thrown down the precipice and destroyed; Amaziah then returned home with great booty. But the Israelitish mercenaries were so incensed at being dismissed in so abrupt a manner, and without any just cause being assigned, that to revenge the contempt cast upon them, they made an inroad into the teritories of Amaziah, laying all waste as far as Bethhoran, putting three thousand people to the sword, and carrying away a great number of their cattle.

Amaziah was so elated by his late victory, that regardless of that God by whom alone kings reign, he degenerated from his pure worship, into the abominable idolatry of the Amalekites. The prophet, upon this, went to the king, and told him, that he could not but wonder at his confiding in those

those powers, that were so far from being able to protect their servants, that they could not defend themselves, but were taken prisoners by the Hebrews, and carried away like slaves to Jerusalem, with the rest of the spoil.

These words of the prophet highly provoked the king's wrath, insomuch that he forbad him, at his peril, to interfere any further in a business that did not concern him. The prophet's answer was, that for the future he would be quiet; but assured him withal, that God would take severe vengeance on him for this wicked and idolatrous innovation of religion, which he had introduced.

But this infatuated prince was so transported with vanity and insolence upon his late success, that without any regard to the hand of Divine Providence, he wrote an imperious letter some time after to Joash, the king of the Israelites, commanding him and his people to pay the same allegiance to him, which they had formerly rendered to his ancestors, David and Solomon; or, in case of their refusal, to expect a decision of the cause by the sword; to which summons Joash returned this answer.

KING JOASH, TO KING AMAZIAH, GREETING.

IT happened, once upon a time, betwixt a cyprus tree and a thistle, upon Mount Lebanon, *that the thistle sent to the cyprus, saying, Give thy daughter to my son for wife; whereupon a wild beast went and trod down the thistle.*

Make use of this example for your own instruction, and moderate your own ambition, without aspiring to things out of your reach. Take care that your confidence and pride, for the overthrow of the Edomites, *do not betray you some time or other to the loss of your life and kingdom.*

This answer to Amaziah was but as oil to the flame, and made him ten times more furious and implacable than before: God in his justice giving him up, as may be reasonably supposed, to such a violence of rage and passion, as would certainly expose him to the stroke of divine justice for his impiety.

In this enraged state of mind he took the field, and both armies were drawn up in form of battle. But no sooner were his men advanced within sight of the enemy, than they were instantly struck with such consternation and terror, that they turned their backs without striking a blow, and flying several ways, left Amaziah prisoner in the hands of his enemy, who refused to give him quarters upon any other terms, than that the citizens of Jerusalem should set open the gates, and receive him and his victorious army into the town.

With these hard terms the present crisis obliged them to comply, having life or death immediately before them; so that Joash entered the town in his triumphal chariot, through a breach of three hundred cubits of the wall that he had caused to be broken down,

down, with his prisoner Amaziah marching before him; and this was the splendid manner in which he took possession of the place, making himself master of the city.

He made a seizure of all the holy plate and treasure, and of all the gold and silver likewise that he could find in the palace, carrying the whole spoil away with him; and then dismissing the king, he returned to Samaria. This calamity befel Jerusalem in the fourteenth year of Amaziah's reign.

The people of Jerusalem, after this, entered into a conspiracy against him, so that he was forced to fly for safety to Lachish; but his flight availed not, for the assassins followed him thither, and murdered him upon the spot.

His body was carried back to Jerusalem, where it was buried in royal state. Such was the miserable end of the once victorious Amaziah, for the neglect of God's worship, and introducing innovations in his holy religion.

He died in the one-and-fiftieth year of his age, and twenty-ninth of his reign, leaving his son Uzziah successor to his government.

CHAP. III.

JONAH PROPHESIES AGAINST NINEVEH. UZZIAH BEGINS HIS REIGN WELL, BUT DEGENERATES, AND IS PUNISHED. SEVERAL SUCCESSIVE KINGS OBTAIN THE CROWN BY THE HEINOUS CRIME OF MURDER. VICTORIOUS CHARACTER OF JOTHAM, KING OF JUDAH. NAHUM FORETELS THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH, AND THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE. JOTHAM DIES, AND IS SUCCEEDED BY AHAZ, AN IDOLATROUS PRINCE, WHO IS VANQUISHED ON HIS ACCESSION BY HIS ENEMIES WITH GREAT SLAUGHTER.

IN the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, Jehoram, the son of Jehoash, was made king over Israel, and kept his court at Samaria, in the palace of his forefathers, for forty years of his reign.

He was a prince impious to the highest degree, wholly abandoned to idolatry; and so licentious, that he gratified his inordinate desire, in violation of all law, civil or religious; and the judgments which his profligate course of life brought upon the Israelites, were almost innumerable. It was foretold of him by Jonah the prophet, that he should overcome the Syrians, and enlarge his territories as far as the city Hamath on the north, and the lake Asphaltites on the south, which were formerly the bounds of the Land of Canaan, according to the allotment of Joshua the general.

Jehoram was so elevated upon this prediction, that he took away from

the Syrians all the tract of ground before-mentioned, and annexed it to his own dominions; and made good the prediction of the prophecy of Jonah; and the circumstances attending it, being so peculiar in their nature, and so demonstrative of the divine power, cannot with justice be omitted in this History, and is therefore related in the following plain manner.

The word of the Lord came unto Jonah, saying, Arise, and go to Nineveh, and there cry aloud to them, that that great kingdom is to be suddenly destroyed; but Jonah, to avoid the danger of being author of such tidings to them, thought it better to go out of the way (as if he could hide himself from God) and therefore went on board a vessel at Joppa, that was bound for Tarshish in Cilicia.

While they were upon the way, there arose a violent tempest, that put the master and the mariners, and the pilot himself, into the greatest apprehension of danger. But it was observed, that while the crew were at their prayers, and labouring to keep the ship above water, Jonah was the only man that did not exert himself, but lay flat upon his face in the hold, with his head covered.

The wind and the storm increasing, the company were induced to think, that this calamity had befallen them for the wickedness of some of the people that they had on board; and therefore agreed among themselves to put it to the lot, in order to discover the man. They did so, and the lot fell upon the prophet.

This put the crew upon enquiring what he was, and what might be his business? He told them that he was an Israelite, and a prophet of God; adding, That he was the man that had raised the storm; and they had no way left to save themselves and the vessel, but by casting him over board.

It first appeared to them in so odious a light, thus cruelly to deliver up a stranger, who had put his very life into their hands, to certain and inevitable destruction, that they durst not resolve upon it.

But, at last, partly by the extreme necessity of the case, (for the ship was upon the very point of sinking) partly by the authority of the prophet, and partly by their own fear, they were prevailed upon, and threw him into the sea; at which instant the storm ceased.

The Sacred History says, that he was taken up by a whale, and after three days, cast up again, alive and unhurt, upon the shore; from whence, after pardon obtained from Almighty God for his disobedience, he went directly to Nineveh, according to his commission; where, when he arrived, getting upon an eminence, that he might be more generally heard, he foretold, that the empire of Asia was near at an end. And having published this prophetical declaration, he departed.

But to return to Jehoram. After a prosperous reign of forty years, he was buried at Samaria; Zachariah his son succeeded him, as Uzziah succeeded Amaziah in the fourteenth year of Jehoram, to the government of

of the two tribes at Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah, a native of Jerusalem.

He was a man of great courtesy and justice; brave, provident, and industrious; he made war upon the Philistines, and took Gath and Jabneh from them by assault, and demolishing their walls. He made another expedition also against the Arabians, who bordered upon Egypt, and built a town near the Red Sea, which he guarded by a strong garrison. After this he subdued the Ammonites, and laid them under contribution, reducing the whole country as far as the frontiers of Egypt.

He then applied himself to the repairing of the walls of the city, and whether they were decayed by age or the neglect of former governors, he rebuilt them, and repaired that breach also, which the king of the Israelites had made, when Amaziah was his prisoner, at his triumphant entrance into the city.

He erected also several towers of one hundred and fifty cubits in height, and built castles and strong forts for the security of the open country, beside many aqueducts, cisterns, and basons, for the relief of his herds and cattle, whereof the number was incredible, the country being naturally suited for pasture.

He was himself a great lover of tillage, planting, gardening, nurseries, and all sorts of husbandry.

As to military affairs, he had an army of three hundred and seventy thousand select men, under the command of two thousand brave experienced officers, all well armed, with swords, bucklers, brazen corselets, bows, slings, and trained to the exercise of arms, after the most accurate method of martial discipline as used in that age.

He had several machines and engines also for battery, and casting of stones and darts, beside grappling-hooks, and other instruments of war.

But his mind was so elated with the vanity of these preparations and designs, that his ambition for a transitory and earthly glory diverted his attention from blessings everlasting, and the worship and service of the Almighty; insomuch that he deviated from his integrity, after the example of his father, from a weakness of mind, that was not able to bear up against the tide of prosperity and success.

The king, upon a solemn festival, dressed himself in a sacerdotal habit, and went into the holy temple to offer up incense to the Lord upon the golden altar; but Azariah the high-priest, with a train of fourscore priests with him, rushed into the temple, to the king, exclaiming against the wickedness of his usurpation, in breaking in upon an office belonging peculiarly to the priests of the race of Aaron, exclusive of all others; so that Azariah bade him immediately to depart, and not provoke the wrath of God by those indignities any longer.

The king bade them depart, upon the peril of their lives; which menace was followed with a terrible earthquake, and the roof of the temple opening with the shock of it, there passed a beam of the sun through

through the cleft, that struck directly upon the face of this sacrilegious prince, who in that very moment became a leper.

When the priest found the king was leprous, and that the Lord had smitten him, they admonished him to depart the city, as an unclean person, and not fit for common society.

The shame of lying under such a calamity, had by this time in some measure humbled his pride; so that he submitted and obeyed; and when he had lived for some time a private life out of the city, Jotham his son taking upon him the administration of the government, his grief brought him at last to his grave, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and in the fifty-second of his reign. According to the notions concerning lepers in that age, his body was buried in his garden.

Zachariah, the king of the Israelites, and the son of Jeroboam, in the seventh month of his reign, was murdered by the treachery of one of his own domestics, named *Shallum*, the son of *Jabesh;* who, upon the slaughter of Zachariah, took possession of the government. It was ill got, and he lost it as ill, on the thirtieth day after seizing it.

Menahem had at that time the command of an army that was at Tirzah, and upon the news of what had befallen Zachariah, he marched with his troops to Samaria, where he fought and overthrew Shallum, put him to the sword, and afterward, by his own authority, took all the ensigns of royalty to himself, and exercised sovereign power. With this victorious army he marched to Tirzah, but the citizens shut their gates upon him, and refusing to admit him, he was so incensed against them, that he laid waste the whole country, and in the end took the town by assault, put all to the sword without regard to age, sex, or condition; for he exercised that merciless rigor upon his own countrymen, that would have been unpardonable, even towards the worst barbarians; indeed his government was a constant scene of horror and confusion for the whole ten years of his reign over Israel.

He was threatened, after this, with an invasion by *Pul*, the king of Assyria; but not daring to hazard an engagement, he came to a timely agreement with him, compounding for a thousand talents of silver, which he raised upon the people at fifty shekels a head.

He died soon after, and was buried at Samaria, leaving *Pekahiah*, his son, to succeed him. This prince inherited the inhumanity and ill-nature of his father, as well as the government; but his time was short, for after two years reign, he was cut to pieces, together with several of his friends, at a public feast, by the treacherous practice of *Pekah*, the son of *Remaliah*, one of his tribunes; who seized upon the government, and reigned twenty years: leaving it a matter of doubt, whether he was more remarkable for his impiety to God, or his injustice towards men?

In the days of Pekah, Tiglath-Pileser, king of the Assyrians, invaded the Israelites; and after subduing the land of Gilead, and the country

try beyond Jordan, together with that part of Galilee that lies next it, as also all the land of Naphtali, he took the inhabitants prisoners, and carried them away into his own country.

Jotham, the son of Uzziah, reigned in Jerusalem over the tribe of Judah, his mother was a native of that city, and her name was Jerusha; a prince famous for all excellent qualities and virtues; exemplary for his reverence to God, for his justice to men, and for the care he took of the commonwealth; making it his business to keep all things in order, and to rectify what he found amiss. He repaired the porches and galleries in the temple; made good the city walls, where they were falling to ruin; erected large and strong towers; brought the Ammonites under the contribution of a hundred talents a year, ten thousand measures of wheat, and as many of barley, advancing the kingdom also to such a state, that the people were both happy at home, and formidable abroad.

In the reign of this prince, there appeared a Prophet, whose name was Nahum; and he foretold the destruction of Nineveh, and the subversion of the Assyrian empire, in the following manner: *The condition of Nineveh, shall be like that of a fish-pool, in a violent agitation of the waters before a great wind. The people shall fly away before the storm, in trouble and confusion; calling out one to another, stay and take your gold and your silver with you, and no body shall mind it; for their lives shall be much dearer to them than their Treasure.*

They shall have desperate factions and divisions among themselves; weeping and wailing, with the knocking of their knees, and death in their faces. What will become of the habitation of the lions and the dams of the lion's whelps?

Nineveh, says the Lord, I will strike thee out from off the face of the earth. and put an end to the outrages of the wild beasts, that thou hast sent into the world.

This is the sum and substance of the prophet's prediction concerning Nineveh, which were punctually fulfilled at the expiration of about an hundred and fifteen years.

Jotham departed this life in the forty-first year, and the sixteenth of his reign; and Ahaz in the course of hereditary right succeeded him.

He was the most impious prince that ever sat upon the throne, both for his deviation from the laws of his country, and his idolatry, in imitation of the kings of Israel.

He built altars in Jerusalem; sacrificed to idols upon them, and his own son among the rest for a burnt-offering, after the manner of the Canaanites, and committed many offences as enormous as these.

While Ahaz persisted in these wicked courses, Rezin the king of Damascus, and Pekah the king of the Israelites, being joined in a league, marched together, with their united forces, and invested the famous city of Jerusalem. But the place was so

well fortified, that they were forced to raise the siege, and quit it.

In the mean time, while the king of Syria possessed himself of the city of Elath by the Red Sea, he put all the inhabitants to the sword, and introduced a colony of Syrians into their places.

He possessed himself after this of several castles and strong holds; did terrible execution upon the Jews, and so, with a prodigious booty, marched his army back again to Damascus.

When the king of Jerusalem came to understand that the Syrians were departed, he thought himself able to cope with the king of Israel, and drew out an army against him; but his wickedness was so great, that God in just indignation gave the victory to his enemy, with the loss of an hundred and twenty thousand of his men.

In the same battle, Zichri, the general of the Israelites, killed Maaseiah, the son of Ahaz, in a single Encounter, and slew also Azrikam the captain of the guards; taking Alkanah, the general of the Jewish troops, prisoner; beside an infinite number of captives of the Benjamites, whom they carried away together with the spoil to Samaria.

There was at that time a prophet in Samaria, whose name was Oded, who went out of the town to meet the army in their return, crying out to them with aloud voice, that they were not to look upon this victory as gained by their own virtue and valour, but as a judgment from heaven upon king Ahaz. The prophet therefore told them, they were to blame not to rest satisfied with the success of their undertaking, without making slaves of their kindred and relations of the two tribes; advising them by all means to set them at liberty, and send them home again, without offering any indignity to their persons, upon the peril of falling under God's displeasure.

The Israelites upon this occasion called a counsil to deliberate on the best measures that could be pursued, in consequence of the prophet's warning, when Berechiah, a man of great authority in the assembly, with three more, declared themselves utterly against the bringing any of the prisoners into the town, for fear God's vengeance should fall upon all the rest. Adding moreover, that they already had many heinous transgressions alledged against them. and therefore needed not to aggravate the charge.

The soldiers were so far wrought upon by this consideration, that they gave their prisoners liberty to go whither they would, and take what they would with them; whereupon four persons were appointed to set them free, take care of their persons, furnish them with provisions for their journey, and bear them company beyond Jericho. When they had brought them on their way within a little of Jerusalem, they returned to Samaria.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

CRUELTY AND IMPIETY OF AHAZ, WHO DIES, AND IS SUCCEEDED BY HIS SON HEZEKIAH. RESTORATION OF THE TRUE WORSHIP, AND DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES. SAMARIA TAKEN BY ASSAULT. IDOLATRY PUNISHED BY A DREADFUL PESTILENCE. A NEW COLONY IS PLANTED IN SAMARIA.

THE fatal overthrow Ahaz sustained from the Israelites, obliged him to call in the aid of foreign powers. Accordingly he sent an embassy to *Tiglath-Pilefer*, the king of the Assyrians, with promises of great sums of money, and magnificent presents, desiring succours from him against the Israelites, and those of Syria and Damascus.

This prince no sooner heard the desire and proposal of Ahaz, than he marched directly to his aid, laying the country of Syria waste, taking Damascus by assault, and putting king Rezin to the sword.

The people of Damascus he transplanted to the *Upper Media*, and supplied their places at Damascus, with colonies of his own people. He then depopulated great part of the land of Israel, carrying away vast numbers of them prisoners.

Having thus harrassed the Syrians, Ahaz took all the gold and silver out of the king's treasury, and that likewise out of the temple, with all the rich donations, and carried the whole along with them to Damascus; which according to his agreement, he delivered up to the king of Syria, with acknowledgments for the favour of his relief, and then returned to Jerusalem.

Now this king had so little sense, either of honour or reason, that the mortal enmity between him and the Syrians, did not hinder him from worshipping their gods, and joining in their ceremonies; vainly persuading himself, from his blind zeal in idolatrous worship, that they would be propitious to his arms; and then, when he was overcome, on the other hand, his business was to make friends of the gods of the Assyrians. Indeed he was prone to fall into every odolatrous abomination by the neglect of the worship of the true God, and in opposition to the profession and practice of his ancestors.

This apostacy drew down the wrath and vengeance of God upon him. Nay, the contempt and aversion that he had for the honour and service of God, was so extravagant, that after he had rifled the temple, he commanded the very doors to be kept shut, out of enmity to God and goodness, and to prevent the celebrating of any act of religious worship in that holy place.

But at last, after a constant course of impiety he departed this life at thirty-six years of age, and in the sixteenth of his reign, leaving his son Hezekiah his successor to the government. About this time Pekah king of Israel lost both his government and his life by the treachery of a court confident, called *Hoſhea*, who enjoyed the fruit of his violence and usur-

usurpation, for the space of nine years.

He was one of the worst of men, that in his life and conversation shewed not the least thought or belief, of a God. *Shalmaneſer*, the king of the Assyrians, led an army against him, and being cast off by God, whom he himself had rejected and despised, he was easily overcome, and forced to submit to the terms of a tributary.

In the third year of Hoshea's reign, Hezekiah succeeded king of Jerusalem.

He was a person endowed with an excellent understanding, and a lover and practiser of piety and justice. The first thing he did upon his coming to the throne, was to provide for the comfort of his people, in introducing the religion of the only true God; to this end, he immediately summoned a meeting of the Priests and Levites, and addressed them to this effect: *I need not remind you of the many and great calamities that have befallen you for the iniquities of my father, in not rendering to God the honour due to him, and for the madneſs of your being prevailed upon to pay divine adoration to his idols; wherefore being now taught by woful experience, how dangerous a thing it is to prevaricate with the Almighty, it is my advice, that all paſt miſcarriages may be forgotten, and that you purify and purge yourſelves, together with the Prieſts and Levites, from all your former pollutions; and after that preparation, that you ſet open the doors of that holy place; and when you ſhall have reſtored it to its original purity, by conſecrations, expiatory luſtrations, and ſacrifices in form, we may then promiſe ourſelves that God will pardon our impieties, and proſper us in all our undertakings.*

The priests were so encouraged by this advice of the king, that they presently opened the temple, cleared it of all impurities, made ready their holy vessels, and laid their sacrifices upon the altar, according to the Jewish manner.

The king, in the mean time, sent messengers throughout all his dominions to summon the people up to Jerusalem to the feast of unleavened bread; which had been then a long time intermitted, through the impious neglect of former kings; exhorting and inviting the Israelites also to forsake the practice of their idolatrous superstitions, and return to the exercise of their holy religion, and to the worship of the true God; promising them that they should have liberty to come and go, and celebrate this festival in common with his own people.

The king observed, that it was not for his own sake, but for theirs, that he gave them this invitation; and that they themselves should reap the benefit if they followed his counsels.

But when the Israelites heard the message, they were so far from giving any heed to it, that they held the messengers in derision, and treated the prophets contemptibly, for the good office of advising them to return to their duty, and foretelling them the miseries that should befal them, without a timely repentance. Thus they

they proceeded from one wickedness to another, till God in his wrath avenged himself upon them for their impiety, by delivering them up into the hands of their enemies. But there were great numbers yet of the tribes of Manasseh, Zebulon, and Issachar, whose hearts were touched with this advice of the prophet's, and who went up to Hezekiah at Jerusalem, to worship.

When the multitude was assembled there, the king went up to the temple, together with the princes and the people, where he sacrificed for himself seven bulls, seven rams, and as many goats; and when he had first laid his hands upon the heads of the victims, both the king and the princes left the execution to the priests, who cut the throats of the sacrifices, and burnt them whole, the Levites standing in a ring about them, singing hymns, and accompanying their voices with musical instruments, as David had prescribed them of old, the rest of the priests joining in the concert.

When this was over, the king and the people cast themselves prostrate, and worshipped the Lord.

Hezekiah sacrificed after this seventy bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; bestowing also six hundred bullocks, and three thousand other cattle, as a bounty for the entertainment of the people; and when the priests had performed their office, according to the customary method, the king himself feasted with the people, and joined with them in praises and thanksgivings.

The feast of unleavened bread was now coming on, and in the time of their preparations for the feast of the Passover, they offered up a course of other sacrifices, for seven days successively, and the king bestowed upon the people, out of his own bounty, two thousand bulls, and seven thousand of other cattle, over and above their own number. The princes likewise, after Hezekiah's example, super-added a thousand bulls, and a thousand and forty other beasts; insomuch, that from the days of Solomon down to that time, there was never such a solemnity known to be so splendidly celebrated.

As soon as this festival was over, they made it their next work to purge the whole country, having first purified Jerusalem itself from the abomination of their idols.

The king then appointed daily sacrifices, according to the law, to be supplied out of his own stores, and commanded the people to present the Priests and Levites with their tenths and first-fruits that they might not be taken off by any common business from their attendance upon the altar.

By this means they were abundantly furnished with all sorts of fruits and provisions. The king also ordered the building of granaries and store-houses, for the common use and service of themselves, their wives, and children, to be distributed in proportion to their shares; so that by these degrees, the ancient descipline came in some measure to be restored.

Having thus revived the worship of God, and extirpated idolatry through-

out his dominions, the king made war upon the Philistines, and over-ran their country, subduing all their cities, from Gath to Gaza, which he added to his territories.

When the king of Assyria sent a message to him to demand the tribute from him, which was formerly paid by his father, with a menace, in case of refusal, to take his country from him; Hezekiah, depending upon the goodness of God, the consciousness of his integrity, and the veracity of the prophet Isaiah, from whom he was sure to be forewarned of the event of things, gave no heed to the menaces of the Assyrians.

Upon intelligence being given to Shalmaneser king of Assyria, that the king of Israel was entered into a secret treaty with So, king of Egypt, to join in an alliance with him, the Assyrian, in a furious indignation, immediately marched with his army against Samaria.

In the third year of the siege, and in the ninth of the reign of that king, he took it by assault, in the seventh year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem.

The loss of this place was the final ruin of the kingdom of Israel; the people were all transplanted into Media and Persia, and Hoshea, the king taken with them alive; while the king of Assyria brought others from thence in exchange, as far as Cutha, a river of Persia, to re-people the land of the Israelites, and plant them in Samaria.

This transportation of the ten tribes from the place of their abode, fell out nine hundred and forty-seven years, from the coming of their forefathers out of the land of Egypt, to their taking possession of the land before, by force of arms; eight hundred years from the days of Joshua, and two hundred and forty years, seven months, and seven days, after the revolt from Rehoboam, the grandson of David, to Jeroboam.

Such was the miserable end of that stiff-necked people, who would neither be subject to laws, nor hearken to the voice and precautions of their prophets, though they foretold them that their certain destruction was at hand, unless they departed from their evil ways.

These calamities arose from that seditious revolt from Rehoboam, in advancing a servant over the head of his master; who, in contempt of God, and his holy laws, drew the Indignation of heaven upon the people, by drawing them to the practice of the same abominations, by his example; but he escaped not the just judgment of God.

The king of Assyria carried all before him, and extended his victorious arms throughout Syria and Phœnicia *.

The

* There is mention made of his name in the History of the Tyrians; for in the reign of *Elalæus*, as *Meander* has it in his Annals, (that were translated out of the Tyrian language into Greek, but now only found in *Eusebius*) he made war upon Tyre. His words are to this purpose:

"This same *Elalæus* reigned thirty-six years, and upon a revolt of the *Gittæans*, he sent a fleet thither, that reduced

The new-comers in Samaria were called *Cuthites*, from a country of Persia of that name, and from the river Gutha, from whence they had their original. There were five nations of them, and they brought many of their own country gods with them, highly provoking the true and great God against them, for the worship they paid to the idols; so that they were visited with so dreadful a plague, that the place was almost depopulated.

Having used divers means to avert this dreadful judgment, they were at length advised by the oracle to have recourse to the worship of the great God, as the only means of finding relief for their calamity.

The people immediately upon this sent for commissioners to attend the king of Assyria with a petition, that he would be pleased to send them some of the priests that were carried away captives with the Israelites.

This being granted as they desired, they had the law of Moses read, with an explication upon the practice, and the reason of their religion and discipline, which had so wonderful an effect upon them, that they gave themselves wholly up to the study and exercise of it; and soon after this the pestilence ceased *.

CHAP. VI.

SENACHERIB, KING OF ASSYRIA MAKES WAR UPON HEZEKIAH; RECEIVES CONDITIONS FROM HIM TO WITHDRAW HIS ARMY. BREAKS HIS ARTICLES. HEZEKIAH IS DISTRESSED. APPLIES TO THE PROPHET ISAIAH, WHO PROMISES HIM RELIEF. BLASPHEMY OF SENNACHERIB. PRAYER OF HEZEKIAH. HE RECEIVES A MESSAGE OF HIS DEATH, OBTAINS A REPRIEVE BY A SIGNAL FROM HEAVEN, AND AFTERWARDS PAYS THE DEBT OF NATURE.

IN the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, king of the two tribes, *Sennacherib*, the king of Assyria, marched against him, with a powerful and well-disciplined army.

Having taken all the cities of Judah and Benjamin by assault, he was

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duced them to his obedience; and the king of the Assyrians sent out an army also against him, and invaded the whole country of Phœnicia; till upon the conclusion of a peace, he marched with his troops back again.

"Some short time after this exploit, the cities of Sydon, Arce, Palæ-Tyrus, and several other towns, went over from the Tyrians, to the Assyrian king; who taking it so heniously to see the Tyrians the only people that disputed his authority and power, he dispatched a navy against them of sixty sail, and eight hundred rowers, under the conduct of the Phœnicians, which the Tyrians encountered, with only twelve vessels; broke the whole body, and took five hundred of the rowers prisoners.

"The success of this encounter gave them a wonderful reputation for their skill and ability in naval affairs.

"The king of Assyria, upon this affront, returns, and sets guards along the river, and upon all springs and aqueducts, to keep the Tyrians from water. The Tyrians laboured under this distress for five years, when they were forced to relieve themselves from pits of their own digging."

* The people of that country retained long since the name of *Cuthites*, among the Hebrews; but the Greeks called them Samaritans.

They were partly Jews, and partly Heathens, no way fixed in their opinions and inclinations, accommodating themselves to the present time and occasion.

So long as the Jews were prosperous, we are all of a blood, they cried, and of the lineage of Joseph; but if they happened to fall under any affliction, or adversity, alas, said they, we have nothing to do with them, they are strangers to us; we came a great way off.

now

now ready to advance toward Jerusalem, when an embassy came to him with an offer of submission and tribute.

Sennacherib gave the embassadors audience, resolved immediately to desist from the war, and to comply with the king's terms, promising upon oath, that upon the receipt of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty of gold, he would depart with his army, without attempting any act of hostility.

Hezekiah upon this assurance, emptied all his treasuries, and sent him the money, in confidence of the enemy's departure, according to his oath, and that he might reign afterwards without any difficulty or danger.

The Assyrian took the money, but broke his word; for he marched himself with his troops against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, and left Rabshakeh lieutenant-general, with Tartan, and Rabsarts, to carry on the war against Jerusalem.

Upon the drawing up of the army, they pitched their camp within sight of the walls of the town; and by a messenger, summoned Hezekiah out to a parley,

Hezekiah was not willing to trust himself out; and therefore sent three of his particular friends to supply his place; Eliakim, his deputy governor; Shebna and Joah, keeper of the records.

Upon their coming out of the town, and representing themselves before the officers of the Assyrian army, Rabshakeh, with an imperious tone, bade them carry their master this message: "That the great king Sennacherib would fain know what confidence he valued himself upon, that he should dare to make any great difficulty of owning that great king for his master, and refuse entrance to his army into the city? Does he flatter himself with hope of relief from Egypt, as if they were in a condition to cope with the army of my master? It is the height of frenzy to imagine it, and thereby trust for success to that which will prove inevitably his very bane and ruin.

"You should inform your master that this expedition is not attempted without God's holy will and direction, who will as certainly give the king of Assyria victory over Hezekiah, and his subjects, as he hath given him victory over the Israelites."

Rabshakeh delivered himself in Hebrew, being a language he was versed in; but Eliakim fearing the effect such a discourse in a known tongue might have upon the multitude, desired him rather to speak Syriac. Rabshakeh understanding the cause of Eliakim's fear, raised his voice, and continued his discourse in Hebrew to this purpose:

"Let your people hear, and understand the commands of my master; for it concerns them so to do, and to render themselves subservient.

"It is the business, I know, both of yourselves and of your king, to seduce your people with vain and empty hopes of defending themselves by force; but if you have courage to put it to a hazard, or any sort of pretence to beat off this army from your walls, I am ready to furnish you with two thou-

sand horse, if you will undertake to find riders.

"But, alas! you have no riders wherewithal to try the experiment. If it be so, why are you then so long deliberating upon a thing you will be compelled to do in the conclusion, especially in a case where you are safe, if you do it willingly, and run the most eminent hazard in, if you stay till compelled; as the weaker must of necessity yield at last to the stronger."

This was spoke in the hearing, as well of the people as of the deputies; and no sooner brought to the king's ear, than he divested himself of his royal robes, and put on sack-cloth, after the custom of the country, in token of his humiliation, casting himself prostrate upon the ground, and imploring the aid and favour of Almighty God, being persuaded that he could derive relief from no other source, than the divine protection.

He sent likewise some of his particular friends, together with others of the priesthood, to the prophet Isaiah, that he would intercede with the Lord, by prayers and sacrifices for the common safety, and for the interposition of Providence in behalf of his people.

The prophet complied with the king's request, and succeeded so far in his mediation, that he was authorised by a divine revelation to bid the king and his friends to be of good courage; for the enemy should be overcome without a battle, and abandon his design with loss and disgrace; that his pride should be humbled, and that the hand of the Almighty should be upon him, to his ruin; that Sennacherib himself should miscarry in his Egyptian expedition, and upon that disappointment return home where he should fall by the sword.

Immediately after these encouraging declarations of the prophet, Hezekiah received letters from the king of Assyria, with insolent expostulations on his folly, and presumption, in thinking himself capable of maintaining his liberty against the power of a prince who had already subjected so many warlike nations to his obedience, concluding with a menace, of putting man, woman, and child to the sword, if they did not, without delay, set open their city gates, and give a free entrance to his army *.

Hezekiah relying upon the truth of the divine word, and the power of an Almighty Arm, paid no regard to the threats of the enemy; but betook himself to prayer, and supplication for the protection of the city till the Prophet Isaiah returned with this answer: *That his petition was heard,*

* Heredotus calls this war of *Sennacherib* against the king of Egypt, a war against the priest of *Vulcan*, as being both a king, and a priest of that false god. "And assigns as the cause of *Sennacherib*'s raising the siege of Pelusum, that the king of Egypt, upon this occasion, called to his god for help; which being granted him, was fatal to the Arabian, by a mistake, writing Arabian for Assyrian; and also that in one night there came such troops of rats into the camp of the Assyrians, that they gnawed all their bow-strings to pieces, and made useless several other pieces of their arms, even to the disarming of the Assyrians, who, upon this disappointment, drew off from the town."

and that the danger was over, for any harm the Assyrians should do them upon that undertaking. He told them likewise, that there were happier times at hand, wherein they should live in peace and security upon their own lands and possessions, without fear of an enemy, In process of time the king of Assyria finding all his attempts frustrated, and that nothing succeeded with him, withdrew his army, and went back again to Nineveh.

He had spent much time before Pelusium; and at last when he had brought up his platforms within a little of the top of the walls, and was upon the very point of giving the assault, news was brought him, that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, was upon his march, and approaching with a great reinforcement to assist the Egyptians; and that he took his route through the desert, with a design to fall upon the Assyrians by surprize. Sennacherib was so alarmed at this report, that he immedietely drew off his army.

Sennacherib, at his return from the Egyptian war, found his army that he had left under the command of Rabshakeh almost destroyed by a judicial pestilence, which swept away in general officers, tribunes, and common soldiers, to the number of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, the first night they sat down before the city.

This dreadful mortality so alarmed the king of Assyria, as an awful stroke of divine vengeance, that, lest the remaining part of his army should undergo the same calamity, he retired with the utmost precipitation to his palace of Nineveh, where after a while, he was cut off by his two eldest sons, *Adrammelech*, and *Sharezer*, in the very temple of Nisroch, his darling idol. The people of the country, detesting the inhumanity of the action, banished them out of their dominions, whereupon they fled into Armenia; Esarhaddon, the third son, succeeding to the government: thus ended this mighty expedition.

Hezekiah being now delivered beyond all expectation from any farther apprehension of trouble or danger, and likewise thoroughly convinced that it was the immediate hand of God that wrought his preservation, as well by the plague that destroyed one part of the Assyrian army, as by the terror of that judgment that dismayed the rest: he, together with the people, offered up praises and thanksgivings for the mercies received, but was soon after seized with so dangerous a distemper, that his physicians, and the rest of his friends, despaired of his life.

In this distress, nothing so sensibly afflicted the king, as the consideration, that his dying without issue, the succession of the family would be at end, and the kingdom absolutely left without a legitimate heir.

The anxiety arising from this circumstance so affected the pious king, that he addressed himself to God with suppli-

supplications and (*a*) tears for the prolonging of his life, till he might have a successor out of his loins, and not to take him out of the number of the living, till he might be the father of a son, to preserve his memory to succeeding times.

God took compassion of him, and the rather, because he was not so much troubled for being deprived of his kingdom by death, as for the want of a successor in his own line of descent.

Upon this, the Prophet Isaiah was sent to him, with the comfortable assurance, that in three days his disease should leave him, that he should live fifteen years longer, and that the kingdom should descend at last to his own son and heir.

When the prophet had delivered this message to the king, according to his order, the disease was so desperate, and the news so surprizing, that Hezekiah could not persuade himself into a belief of it, without some prodigy from Isaiah, in confirmation of his authority and commission *.

The prophet asking him what sign or token would give him satisfaction; he propounded, that the shadow upon his dial might go (*b*) ten degrees backward from the place where it then stood.

The king finding this miracle wrought, upon the prayers of the prophet, was restored to health, and went immediately up to the temple, to return unfeigned thanks to his gracious deliverer.

About this time *Berodach Baladan* the son of *Baladan* king of Babylon, having sent ambassadors with presents to Hezekiah, invited him into a league of amity and alliance.

Hezekiah received them with great courtesy; entertained them sumptuously, shewed them his treasure and his armoury, and whatever else he had that was magnificent and valuable, either in gold, or precious

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(*a*) *Tears.* The love of life is natural to us, and the fear of death is so strongly implanted in our very frame and constitution, that it requires no small share of fortitude to receive the sentence of our dissolution, with a proper serenity and composure of mind: human infirmity, was a sufficient apology for Hezekiah's behaviour; but there is somewhat more to be alledged in his behalf.

He saw in himself the royal family of David extinct (he being as yet childless) and consequently all hopes of the Messiah's being born of his race, were become abortive.

He saw the impending storm that threatened his country with ruin and desolation, and that as there was none of his family to succeed him on the throne, all things were in danger of running into anarchy and confusion.

Having this dismal prospect therefore before his eyes, he might well melt in tears at the apprehension of his approaching death, which would extinguish all his hopes, and consummate all his fears, in making him go down childless to the grave.

* It was usual in those days to require at the hands of the Prophets some extraordinary evidence of the truth of their predictions, and it is still necessary.

(*b*) *Ten degrees backward.* Scarce any passage in the Old Testament has been more tortured by licentious critics than this; the general objection against the reality of the miracle, being the great danger of shocking or unhinging the whole frame of Nature, by so retrogade a motion; but surely it is sufficient to silence this cavil to observe, that this was a miracle wrought by the immediate appointment of God himself, and that though it affected the whole frame of Nature, yet no reasonable man can deny, that the same Omnipotent hand that called these stupendous globes into being at first, and assigned to each its peculiar motion, can, whenever he, in his infinite wisdom sees fit, either change, accelerate, or retard such motion to answer the wise purposes of his Providence, and at the same time supercede the effect which such alteration would otherwise have upon this visible system.

stones,

stones, and sent them back with rich presents to their master.

Upon this Isaiah came to him, and asked him who these men were, and whence they came? He told the prophet, that they were sent from the king of Babylon, and that he had shewed them all the riches and curiosities of his palace, that they might gather from thence, how great a prince he was, and thereby possess the king with a just apprehension of his power and importanne.

The prophet, by way of reproof, thus addressed him: *Know, then, that it will not be long before this treasure of years shall be carried to Babylon; several of your posterity, shall be degraded and serve the court of Babylon in the quality of Eunuchs. This you will find to be a truth; for God himself hath foretold it.*

This prediction pierced the very soul of Hezekiah, and extorted from him this declaration:

Though I cannot but be much troubled at the thought of the misery that attends my family, yet since it is God's pleasure, I have no more to beg from heaven, than that I may enjoy the small remainder of my miserable life in peace *.

Hezekiah, according to his humble request, lived during the residue of his reign in peace, and died in the four and fiftieth year of his life, and the nine and twentieth of his reign.

* *Berosus* takes notice of this *Baladan*, king of Babylon; but the Prophet Isaiah who was so infallibly and miraculously inspired in all he said, and so certain of the truth of his predictions, committed all his prophecies to writing, and left them to posterity, for all men to judge of what he foretold, by the event; and this was not his business alone, but there were twelve more that did the same: and all cases of event whatsoever, good or evil, the accomplishment and the prophecy agree exactly together. This should teach us the value that we ought to set upon the inspired writings, beyond all human compositions, and the more we are conversant with heathen authors, the more regard we shall have for the Bible.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

HEZEKIAH IS SUCCEEDED BY MANASSEH, WHOSE COUNTRY IS RAVAGED BY THE KING OF BABYLON, FOR HIS WICKEDNESS. HE IS TAKEN PRISONER, BUT UPON HIS REPENTANCE SET AT LIBERTY. HIS SON AMON IS SOON CUT OFF AND SUCCEEDED BY JOSIAH, A PRINCE OF EXEMPLARY PIETY. INSTANCE OF HIS ZEAL FOR THE TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD. HIS DEATH BY AN EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT. IS SUCCEEDED BY AN IMPIOUS SON, WHO IS DEPOSED BY THE KING OF EGYPT, AND DIES IN EXILE.

MANASSEH, the son of Hezekiah by *Hepzibah*, a native of Jerusalem, succeeded his father in the government, but deviated from his pious example, in every instance that was practicable, committing all those abominations, that in former reigns had brought such judgments on the Israelites.

He was so daring a libertine, as to prophane the holy temple itself, and consequently the whole city, and every part of his dominions, with his detestable idolatries. He began his reign with a contempt of God, and proceeded to a barbarous and bloody persecution of holy and good men, dipping his hands in the blood of the very prophets themselves; insomuch, that hardly a day passed without putting some of them to death, so that the very streets of Jerusalem ran down with their blood. The cry of these impious, and inhuman outrages called so loudly to heaven for vengeance, that God who was highly incensed at this daring impiety, sent sundry prophets, one after another, both to the king and to the people, with cautions to them to repent in time of their neglect of God's worship, and to return to their duty, upon the peril of suffering the same calamities for the same sins that had been inflicted upon their brethren the Israelites before them.

But they regarded not the voice of God by his servants; till they found their inattention and negligencies followed by the most awful tokens of the divine wrath; for upon their im-

pious persisting in their disbelief and contempt of the divine word, God stirred up the king of Babylon and Chaldea, to make war upon them; who sent an army into Judea, that over-ran and destroyed the whole country; surprized *Manasseh*, and carried him away prisoner.

This miserable prince was now by woeful experience rendered sensible of his fault; and upon that reflection, earnestly besought God, so far to soften the hearts of his enemies, as might move them to treat him with some degree of tenderness and humanity. God was not inexorable, but in pity gave ear to his supplication; so that the king of Babylon, after some time, gave Manasseh his liberty, and restored him to his former government.

Upon his arrival at Jerusalem, by the permission and clemency of the conqueror, he made all possible efforts, to atone for his former miscarriages, evincing the principles and practices of a new man, and becoming from the most impious prophaner of sacred things, a most zealous promoter of true religion; for he purged the city, and consecrated the temple afresh, making it his whole business to express his gratitude and reverence toward God, and to preserve to himself his blessing and favour all the days of his life. He took care both by example and authority, to instruct the people in their duties, being conscious to himself, that his former male administration contributed not a little to the misfortunes of the public. He caused an altar to be erected after the prescription and appointment of Moses, and offered daily sacrifices upon it.

When he had restored religion, and the discipline of it, to its original state and purity, he made it his business to fortify Jerusalem; repairing the old walls and encompassing them with new ones. He built several high and strong towers, and furnished the out-works with provisions of all sorts. His conversion to God was attended with such auspicious circumstances, that from the first date of it, to the day of his death, he was looked upon to be one of the happiest of princes. He died in the sixty-seventh year of his age, in the five and fiftieth of his reign, and was buried in his own garden: his son Amon succeeded him in the government.

This prince following the loose example of his father's youth, and practising the same abominations, was quickly called to an account for his miscarriages, by some of his familiar friends and domestics, who cut him off in the four and twentieth year of his life, and the second of his reign. The people brought the murderers to condign punishment, and laid his body in the monument of his father, delivering up the government to his son Josiah, who was at that time a youth of but eight years of age.

Josiah who was a young prince of an excellent disposition, seems to have proposed the example of holy David, as the grand directory of his whole life. In the twelfth year of his age, he gave an eminent instance of an unfeigned piety and justice, in the refor-

reformation of the people from their erroneous persuasions concerning false gods, and gaining them over to reverence the religion of their country.

He repealed several of the ordinances of his forefathers; corrected whatever he found amiss, and applied such remedies, where the case required any such expedient, as the most mature and consummate wisdom and experience could have invented. He regulated his life in exact conformity to the laws of God, and this he seems to have done partly from a pious disposition, and partly from the admonition and advice of his council; who reminded him, that while he reigned with true regard to the interest of his country, and in strict obedience to the Divine Will, success would crown his undertakings; and set before him the terrible judgment that had been inflicted on his predecessors for their apostacy; wherefore he caused all the groves to be cut down that were dedicated to false gods: their altars to be demolished, and all the donations that had been consecrated by their ancestors to the worship of idols, to be taken away, and treated with derision.

The demolition of idols, and all that was erected to the honour of false gods, was general, throughout his dominions; by which means the true worship was introduced with all the rites and ceremonies appertaining to the same.

He appointed also certain magistrates and commissioners, for the regulation of manners, and the ordering of matters in private cases, that no less care might be taken for the distribution of particular justice, than for the government of the state itself.

He likewise dispatched messengers throughout all his dominions, with orders to receive contributions of gold and silver toward the reparation of the temple, from those that were willing to advance that work; leaving all people at liberty that they might have no cause of complaint.

The money being collected and brought in, the care of the disposal of it was committed to *Amasiah*, the governor of the city; *Shaphan*, the Scribe; *Joab*, the Recorder; and *Hilkiah*, the High-Priest; with orders immediately to enter upon the work, and provide artificers, and all materials necessary for the reparation.

By this means the temple was repaired, and a lasting monument erected to posterity, of the king's piety and bounty.

Josiah, in the eighteenth year of his reign, ordered Hilkiah the priest, to have the surplus of the gold and silver that remained over and above the charge of the fabrick, cast into cups, chalices, and other vessels, for the use and service of the temple; ordering likewise, that all the gold and silver remaining still in the treasury, should be brought out, and applied to the same purposes.

But the high-priest, upon removing the gold, happened to discover the sacred books of Moses, as they were deposited in the temple, which he took out and gave to Shaphan to peruse;

peruse; who, upon reading them over, went to the king, and told him, they had executed all his commands; but withal, they had just now found the books of Moses, which he read over to Josiah.

Upon the reading of these books, the king rent his garment, and calling some of his particular friends about him, with the Scribe himself, and Hilkiah, the high-priest, he sent them to the Prophetess, *Huldah*, the wife of Shallum, a man of great eminence, to desire her intercession with God on their behalf, to implore his mercy for him and his people; for it was much to be feared, that some heavy judgment should befall that people for their ancestor's neglect and contempt of the laws of Moses, and that they should be forced from their native soil, to live like vagabonds, dispersed over the face of the earth, and end their days in misery, without obtaining such a reconciliation from God.

The prophetess, upon hearing the king's orders and instructions, bade them return him this answer:

That the sentence was already pronounced, and not to be recalled, upon any supplication or intercession whatsoever; that the people were to be banished their own country, and punished for their disobedience, with the loss of all the comforts of human life; and that this judgment was irrevocable, for their obstinacy in their superstitious impieties, notwithstanding so many earnest exhortations to a timely repentance, and the prophets menacing predictions of all these judgments, if they persisted in their wickedness.

This unchangable decree was to convince them by the event, that there is a just and over-ruling God; and that the predictions which he delivered by the mouth of his prophets, are infallibly true, and the certain indications of his holy pleasure to mankind.

But however, says the prophetess, *tell the king, that out of a regard to his piety and goodness, God will yet be so gracious as not to bring this judgment upon the people in his days; but that the day of his death should be the eve of their final destruction.*

Josiah, upon the report of this answer from Huldah, sent messengers throughout all the cities; commanding all the Priests and Levites, and men of all ages and conditions to come up to Jerusalem.

The first thing he did upon the meeting, was to read the holy books of Moses to them, after which, raising himself upon an eminence in the middle of the throng, he administered to them an oath of obedience to the laws and precepts of Moses, and the observance of God's holy worship, which was taken by the whole multitude, with great alacrity, and universal consent. The sacred oath was followed with sacrifices and prayers to God, for his favour and blessing.

In the next place he laid a strict charge upon the high-priest to take a particular account of the plate and vessels in the temple, and to cast out so many of them as he should find

to

to have been dedicated by any of his ancestors to the worship of idols.

There were many pieces of that kind, that were reduced to dust, and the powder thrown into the air. All the priests being likewise put to death that were not of the stock of Aaron.

Having thus introduced a general reformation in Jerusalem, the king took a tour through his whole dominions where he destroyed all the relicts of Jeroboam's superstition and idolatry, and burnt the bones of the false prophets upon the very altar that Jeraboam had set up *.

Nor did Josiah's zeal rest here; for he sent and went in person to several other Israelites that had escaped the servitude and bondage of the Assyrians, to persuade them at last to forsake the superstitious vanities of foreign religions, to cleave wholly to the worship of the great God of their fathers, according to the rites and customs of their country, and serve him alone.

He likewise caused a strict search to be made in all towns and villages for the discovery of any remainders of idolatrous practices, that might lie concealed, even to the very figures of the horses over the porch of the temple, that their forefathers had dedicated to the sun; and every figure and monument, to which the common people had ignorantly ascribed divine honours, Josiah caused them to be taken away and destroyed.

Having purged the whole nation from every kind of idolatry; he convened all the people at Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, otherwise called the Passover, and gave the multitude out of his own store, thirty thousand young kids and lambs, and three thousand oxen.

The heads of the priests contributed likewise in their order upon the the same occasion, two thousand six hundred lambs; as did the chief of the Levites in their tribe five thousand lambs, and five hundred bullocks: this prodigious number of victims was offered up in sacrifice according to the laws of Moses.

The priests had the conduct of the solemnity; and the precedency in their example to the people. From the time of Samuel the prophet, to to that day, there had never been so solemn a festival; for every thing was done according to the direction of the law, and the prescriptions of ancient custom.

Josiah after this blessed regulation, enjoyed his government in peace, honour, and plenty: till he met his death in the following manner.

Pharaoh-Nechoh, king of Egypt, marched with a powerful army toward Euphrates, against the Medes and Babylonians, who had subverted

* The Prophet foretold, in the hearing of all the people, at the very time when Jeroboam was offering sacrifice, that one of the race of David, Josiah by name, was to do this, whose prediction was made good by the event, three hundred and sixty-one years after the thing was foretold.

the Assyrian empire, with a design to make himself master of Asia.

When he had advanced as far as Megiddo, a town under the jurisdiction of Josiah, that prince absolutely refused him any passage against the Medes through his country.

Pharaoh upon this, sent a herald, to give Josiah to understand, that he had no thought of hostility toward him; nor any design, but to make an hasty march towards Euphrates; desiring him withal, not to put him upon any necessity of making his way by force, as that was very much against his inclination.

This message of the Egyptian had so little effect upon Josiah, that he persisted in the denial of his passage. His obstinacy soon proved fatal to him; for as he was at the head of his army, riding up and down to give orders from one wing to another, an Egyptian pierced him with an arrow, and by that means decided the matter in dispute between the two contending kings. Finding himself in great agony from the stroke he had received, he commanded his army to retire; and returning to Jerusalem, there died of the wound. He was buried with a magnificent solemnity, in the sepulchre of his ancestors, in the nine and thirtieth year of his age, and in the one and thirtieth of his reign; the people mourning for him several days, with great sorrow and lamentation. *.

After the death of Josiah, his son *Johoahaz* took the government upon him in the three and twentieth year of his age, and kept his court at Jerusalem.

He was a man of an impious and immoral disposition, and his mother's name was *Hamutal.*

The king of Egypt, upon his return from the war, sent for Jehoahaz to come to him to Hatham, a city of Syria, where he put hin in fetters, and delivered up the government to Eliakim, his elder brother, by the same father: but changing his name for *Jehoiakim*, and imposing a tax upon the country, of a hundred talents of silver, and one talent of gold; by this means rendered him tributary.

As for Jehoahaz, he carried him along with him into Egypt, where he ended his life, after he had reigned three months and ten days.

This prince trod in the steps of his abandoned ancestors, and followed their example of impiety, injustice, and idolatry.

CHAP.

* The Prophet Jeremiah wrote a passionate elegy upon this occasion, which is yet extant; plainly foretelling the approach of the Babylonian captivity, and the subsequent calamities; committing his predictions to writing, in two books of prophetical presages upon this subject.

Isaiah and Jeremiah were both of the Sacerdotal race; the latter living at Jerusalem from the thirteenth year of Josiah, to the time of the destruction of the temple and city.

CHAP. II.

THE EGYPTIAN DEFEATED BY THE KING OF BABYLON. PREDICTIONS OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH. INSTANCES OF THE CRUELTY AND PERFIDY OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, WHO DEPOSES JEHOIAKIM, AND SETS UP ZEDEKIAH ON HIS THRONE. SECOND DEFEAT OF THE EGYPTIANS BY THE SAME KING. ZEDEKIAH'S OBSTINATE CONTEMPT OF THE PROPHET'S COUNSEL.

IN the fourth year of *Jehoiakim's* reign, *Nebuchadnezzar* the king of Babylon advanced with a mighty army to Carchabesa, a city situate upon the Euphrates; with a resolution to make war upon *Pharaoh Nechoh*, who at that time had all Syria under his command.

The Egyptian well knowing that the Babylonian was no contemptible enemy, took the field with a strong and numerous army, and so marched to the Euphrates, with a resolution to oppose him, but the two armies engaging, the Egyptian was forced to retire with the loss of many thousands of his men.

The Babylonians getting over the Euphrates, subdued the whole country of Syria as far as Pelusium, Judea only excepted.

In the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar, and the eighth of Jehoiakim, the Babylonians broke in furiously upon Judea, threatning them with devastation, unless they would content themselves, with the condition of tributaries, as the rest of the inhabitants of Syria were.

Upon this menace, Jehoiakim submitted to purchase his peace with a sum of money; and for the space of full three years, he made due payment of his contribution; but the year following, upon the credit of an idle report, that the Egyptians was advancing upon an expedition against the king of Babylon, Jehoiakim refused to pay him his tribute, though he quickly found himself miserably disappointed in his expectation, for the Egyptians durst not look the Babylonians in the face.

This the prophet Jeremiah had many times foretold, and warned him of, adding moreover, that he would find the Egyptians a broken reed to trust to.

He presaged likewise the fate of Jerusalem, and that it was suddenly to be destroyed by the Babylonians, and Jehoiakim himself to be made prisoner.

But these warnings, were not only unobserved, but treated by the generality of the people with the utmost contempt. There were some that exhibited formal accusations against the prophet to the king, and would have had him punished as a mover of sedition.

The cause, in fine, was brought before the council; and the majority were for putting him to death; but the reason of things is not always determined by a plurality of voices: so that some, better advised than the rest, were for discharging him the court, and diverting the blow;

blow; observing that Jeremiah, was not the only man that had foretold these calamities to the city, but that Micah had prophesied to the same purpose before him; as well as several others, without being called to account for it by the government: nay, that they were rather had in honour and esteem for their predictions, as the prophets of the Lord.

By this gentle method of reasoning, the council was wrought upon to change their minds, and recall the sentence.

The prophet committed his predictions to writing; and upon a day of fasting, when the people were met together in the temple, in the ninth month of the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, he read the book to the congregation; wherein was contained the whole history of what was to befall the temple, the city, and the people.

The princes, upon the hearing of this book, took it away from the prophet, commanding both himself for the defence of the life of him and his Scribe *Baruch*, immediately to depart, without letting any body know where to find them.

Then they carried the book to the king, who ordered his secretary to read it to him and his friends about him. The king was so greatly alarmed when he heard the awful contents, that he tore the book, threw it into the fire, and ordered Jeremiah and Baruch to be immediately brought to him and punished. But they were already withdrawn out of the way.

Soon after this event, Jehoiakim being affrighted with so many dismal predictions, received the king of Babylon with his army into the city; and thinking himself secure from any danger, had made no preparations for the defence of the rights of his crown. But the Babylonian, upon his admittance broke his conditions, and put the flower of the youth of Jerusalem, together with the king himself, to the sword; commanding his body to be cast into the fields without the walls of the city, and constituting his son Jehoiachin king, both of the city and country, in his father's stead.

He carried away near three thousand men of note and quality, captives to Babylon; in which number was the Prophet Ezekiel, being at that time a youth.

Such was the end of king Jehoiakim, who lived six and thirty years, and reigned eleven; and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him. His mother's name was *Nehuſhta*, of Jerusalem; and the time of his reign was three months and ten days.

When Nebuchadnezzar came to a serious review of his late transactions, he could not approve of his placing Jehoiachin upon the throne, as it appeared reasonable to him, that the young prince would endeavour to revenge the perfidy he had practised to his deceased father, by exciting a rebellion.

Upon this consideration he sent away an army to Jerusalem. Now Jehoiachin, being a just and humane prince, could not endure to see the city in danger of being utterly destroyed for his sake; and therefore

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entered into a treaty with the king of Babylon's deputies, surrendered the city on condition that the inhabitants, being exempted from any kind of violence, and delivered hostages for the performance of all the articles specified.

But before the expiration of the year, the king of Babylon breaking his faith with them, commanded his officers to secure all the youth of the city, and all kinds of artificers, and to bring them to him bound and fettered, so that ten thousand eight hundred thirty-two persons (among whom were Jehoiachin himself, his mother, and his kindred) were by the king's command, all kept in custody.

Nebuchadnezzar having thus deprived Jehoiachin of his crown and dignity, advanced *Zedekiah*, his father's brother, to the government in his place; obliging him by oath, neither to attempt any innovations in that country, nor directly or indirectly join with, or assist the Egyptians. He was one and twenty years of age when he entered upon the government; and he and Jehoiachin were brothers by the mother's side. Zedekiah on his elevation discovered no regard to the laws of God, nor the interest of the people, but gave loose to the immediate sallies of a vicious inclination, and mixed with the herd in the idolatry and depravity of the age, insomuch that the prophet Jeremiah often exhorted him to change his course of life, and betake himself to the exercise of piety and justice, regardless of what his courtiers, or his false prophets told him; a lewd people who had abused him in their purposes and predictions, when they told him the Babylonians should never besiege Jerusalem again; and that whatever they encountered, the Egyptians should overcome them.

As this was all false, and would appear so to be by the event, Zedekiah could not for the present but acknowledge the advice of the prophet to be reasonable, and that it was his interest to believe it; but when he attended to the counsels of mercenary sycophants, the prophets address vanished from his mind.

At this very juncture Ezekiel being at Babylon, foretold the destruction of the temple, and sent the prediction of it to Jerusalem. Now the two prophets agreed exactly in the particular circumstances of the town's being taken by force, and Zedekiah carried away captive; but the thing, and the only thing that staggered Zedekiah in the belief of the prophecy was this; Ezekiel foretold, that Zedekiah should not see Babylon and Jeremiah affirmed, that the king himself should carry him prisoner thither.

This seeming inconsistency, or at least diversity of expression, gave Zedekiah some sort of colour for doubting the truth of the other circumstances wherein they agreed, though the following events made good every thing that had been foretold.

After an alliance of eight years, between the two kings, Zedekiah shamefully broke his contract, and went over to the interest of the

Egyptians, assured that their power united would be able to crush the king of Babylon. But the Babylonian, upon the first notice of this treachery, marched his army towards Zedekiah, laid his country desolate, forced his castles and strong holds, and so advanced forward to the attack, even of Jerusalem itself.

The Egyptian being given to understand with what difficulties his friend and ally Zedekiah was surrounded, advanced immediately to his relief, with a resolution to attempt the raising the siege.

Now the Babylonian, upon intelligence of his march and design, instead of waiting for his arrival, withdrew from the siege, and advancing towards his army, a general engagement ensued, and the Egyptians were totally routed.

The siege being raised, or rather respited upon this occasion, the false prophets suggested a thousand delusions to Zedekiah; such as the folly of apprehending any danger from the Babylonians, or fearing that they should drive the Hebrews from their habitations, to carry them captive to Babylon; whereas it was rather to be expected, on the other hand, that their prisoners that were already exported should be called back again, and all the plate and treasure that the king had carried away, restored to the temple.

But Jeremiah, on the contrary assured the king, that events would turn out in direct contrariety to what his flatterers had falsly insinuated, positively charging them with imposture and delusion, and affirming, that there was no good to be expected from the Egyptians; but that they should first be overcome, and the Babylonian army return back to besiege Jerusalem. And that as many of them as should survive the sword and famine, should be carried away captive, their houses pillaged, their goods taken away; the temple and city plundered, and laid waste by fire and sword, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition.

The terms of the prophecy were; *We are condemned to ſerve theſe people, and their poſterity, for ſeventy years; and the Medes and Perſians, at the ſeventy years end, ſhall deliver us from that bondage, by the utter extinction of the Babylonian empire. After which time, being ſet at liberty by their aſſiſtance, we ſhall return hither again, rebuild the temple, and reſtore the city to its former ſtate.*

These words of the prophet gained the belief of the major part of the people; but the leading men, and the licentious, atheistical multitude, looked upon what he said, as the discourse of a mad-man. and treated him accordingly.

As Jeremiah was going toward Anathoth, the place of his birth, about twenty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, he was met upon the way by a busy magistrate, who apprehended him, and took him into custody, upon a pretence, that he was a deserter, and going over to the king of Babylon.

The prophet denied the accusation, and declared in his own defence, that he was going to the place of

of his nativity. But the other would not believe him, and therefore carried him away to the ministers of state, and officers of justice; where, after a formal examination, they set him aside as a malefactor condemned to die; and in this miserable condition, he continued for a considerable space.

But in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, the tenth month, and the tenth day of that month, the king of Babylon came once again with his army to Jerusalem; and laying siege to it, attempted, by the exertion of all his strength and artifice, during the space of eighteen months to subdue it. But it still held out, not only against a powerful enemy before it, but a raging pestilence and famine, in the midst of it. Jeremiah being in prison all this while, called out to the multitude to set open the gates, and receive the Babylonians into the city; as they had no other way to save themselves, their families, and the town, from a certain and an inevitable ruin; assuring them also, that those who staid in the city must expect to perish, either by the sword, or by famine; whereas those who fled out to the enemy would save their lives; but the princes, in the depth of their extremity, were so far from giving ear to the prophet's presage and advice, that they represented him to the king, as a turbulent man, a mutineer, and a discourager of the people, with his idle stories of misery and desolation; suggesting that the garrison was hearty, and resolute enough to defend the place to the last extremity, if he did not with the ill-boding menaces of slavery and destruction, damp their zeal and courage.

The king was not by disposition rash or cruel, but at this critical juncture, fearing the effects of opposing the leading and principal persons of the city, he resigned Jeremiah to their disposal; wherefore they went in all haste to the prison; took out the prophet, and let him down by a rope into a filthy pit, where he continued up to the neck in mud, for they intended to choke him.

As he was in this condition, a favourite servant of the king's an Ethiopian born, went and told Zedekiah how they had treated the prophet; giving it as his opinion, that his great men and favourites had not done well in the aggravation of his misfortune, by exposing him to a death, so much more grievous than that which he was reasonably to expect in his chains.

This conduct of the servant having induced the king heartily to repent his having left the prophet to the discretion of his enemies; ordered the Ethiopian to take thirty trusty men out of his family, with ropes, and whatever he should find necessary for saving of him, and to join with them in getting him out of the pit with all possible expedition.

The servant did as he was ordered, and set the prophet at liberty; who was soon after this brought privately to the king, and had this question put to him; whether or no he could procure him from heaven any present relief under his miserable circumstances? The prophet answered him that

that he could; but the people would neither believe him, nor follow his counsels, adding in words to this effect, *All your pretended friends, are my mortal enemies: they look upon me as a false wretch, and are at this instant in a conspiracy to destroy me; and where are those impostors now, that deluded the people into a belief that they were out of danger from the Babylonians? so that by telling you the very truth, I may endanger my life.*

The king, upon this, promised the prophet upon oath, that he would neither take away his life himself, or suffer any of his people to do it.

Jeremiah took his word and honour for it, and advised him by all means to deliver up the city into the hands of the king of Babylon; this was the only way in the world, to be safe in his own person, to avoid the imminent danger he was in; preventing the burning of the temple, and the laying of the city level with the ground. He assured him moreover by the special direction of God himself, that if he pursued any other measures, all the calamities that should ensue upon his miscarriages, with the utter ruin of himself, his family, and his people, would be charged to his account.

The king then told him, that he had a great inclination to take his counsel for the common good; but was afraid lest some of his friends that were already gone over to the Babylonians, should accuse him to Nebuchadnezzar, and put him in danger of his life. The prophet bade him not fear on that account; for if he delivered up the city, neither himself, or his wives, his children, or the temple itself, should suffer any thing.

After these words the king dismissed the prophet, with a charge not to make any discovery, even to the princes' themselves, of what had passed in this conference; but if any came to have a hint that there had been such a meeting, and enquire into the business, it might be pretended that the prophet came to move the king for his liberty.

The prophet did as he was ordered, and gave that answer to all people that asked him his business with Zedekiah.

CHAP. III.

THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM. CRUELTIES EXERCISED UPON ZEDEKIAH. CONQUEST AND CAPTIVITY OF THE EGYPTIANS. MIRACULOUS STORY OF DANIEL, SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO. PREFERMENT OF DANIEL FOR INTERPRETING DREAMS. DEATH OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

DURING these transactions the king of Babylon went on vigorously with the siege; his works were finished, and his towers carried up so high, as to command the town, and beat the defendants from the walls; and these preparations were made round the city in order for a general assault. The place was as resolutely defended as it was vigorously assailed, the besieged having plague

plague and famine to contend within the town, as well as enemies, and other difficulties without. They stood firm against all stratagems and machines, opposing one instance to another, as if the dispute had been matter of skill and art, as well as force; the besiegers business being to take the city, and the safety of the besieged consisting in eluding or diverting the plots and endeavours of the enemy.

This contest lasted eighteen months; but in the end, for want of provisions within the town, and of numbers to maintain it, against the multitude of besiegers, furnished with all manner of arms and warlike instruments, they were reduced to the necessity of delivering it up.

It was taken in the eleventh year, and the ninth day of the fourth month of the reign of Zedekiah, by the commanders to whom the care of the siege was committed by Nebuchadnezzar, who at that time was at Riblah. The captains, with the rest of the soldiery, went into the temple, which king Zedekiah perceiving, he took his wives, children, commanders and friends, and they all fled away privately by a narrow passage toward the desart. But the Babylonians getting intelligence of this escape, by means of deserters, they made after them early the next morning, overtook and surrounded them at a place not far from Jericho.

Zedekiah's friends and companions, in his flight, seeing the enemy advance toward them, quitted their master, and ran several ways to avoid personal danger. The king being in a manner abandoned, with his wives and children, and a small number of his company, fell into the hands of the enemy, who presently carried them to the king of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar no sooner beheld him, than he upbraided him with perfidy and ingratitude, in words to the following effect. *Did not you promise to manage the power and authority that I put you in possession of, for my advantage, by making you a king in your brother Jehoiachin's place, but you have employed your credit, and interest that I gave you to the ruin of your patron and benefactor? but that God is great and just; who, for the punishment of your treachery and ingratitude, hath now made you my prisoner.*

When the king had thus severely reproached him, he immediately caused his children and his friends to be put to death before his face, and in the sight of the rest of the captives; commanded Zedekiah's eyes to be put out, and his wretched person afterwards to be carried away in chains to Babylon.

This proceeding verefied the two prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; which Zedekiah so little regarded because there appeared something of a contradiction between them; the former foretelling, that he should be taken captive, and being carried to Babylon, should speak with the king himself, and see him face to face; but Ezekiel's prediction was, that he should be carried away to Babylon, and should not see him: which

he could not do after he was deprived of his sight *. Thus was rendered extinct the kings of the race of David, after a succession of one and twenty reigns, during the space of five hundred and fifteen years, six months, and ten days, including the twenty years reign of Saul, who was of another tribe.

Nebuchadnezzar, after this great victory obtained, sent *Nebuzar Adan*, his commander in chief, to Jerusalem, with orders to pillage the temple, and burn it; to do the like to the palace; and after the laying the city level with the ground, to carry away the people captive to Babylon. In the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, Nebuzar-Adan put his instructions into execution; taking away out of the temple all the vessels of gold and silver, Solomon's great laver, with the brazen pillars, and their chapiters, with the golden tables and candlesticks; and after this general plunder, he first set the temple on fire; and after that, laid the palace and the city in ashes.

This happened on the first day of the fifth month; the eleventh of Zedekiah, and the eighteenth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. The temple was burnt four hundred and seventy years, six months, and ten days from the building of it; one thousand and sixty-two years, six months, and ten days, from the Israelites coming out of the land of Egypt; one thousand nine hundred and fifty years, six months, and ten days from the deluge; and three thousand five hundred and thirteen years, six months, and ten days from the creation of the world.

Upon the destruction of Jerusalem, and the transportation of the people, Nebuzar-Adan took the following persons prisoners along with him.

There was the (*a*) High-Priest, *Seraiah*, and after him *Zephaniah*, who was the next Priest in dignity; three head keepers of the temple; the first eunuch of the bed-chamber, with seven of the king's friends, beside the king's secretary, and other men of note, to the number of sixty; which were brought altogether to the king, who was then at Riblah, a city of Syria.

The king caused the heads of the high-priest, and the great men, to be struck off in that city; but the multitude of the prisoners, together with Zedekiah himself, he ordered to be bound, and carried captive to Babylon, together with *Jehozadock*, † the High-Priest, to be taken and bound along with them.

Having gone through the royal line, and the succession of kings,

* This may serve to convince, even the most ignorant, of the power and wisdom of God, and of the constancy of his counsels, through all the various ways of his operations; it may likewise shew us that God's foreknowledge of things is certain, and his Providence regular, in the ordering of events; besides it holds forth a most exemplary instance to us, of the danger of giving way to the motions of incredulity and folly, that take from us the means of discerning the judgments that threaten us.

(*a*) *High-Priest Seraiah.* The person whom Jeremiah had desired to read an account of his prophecies to the Jews, then in captivity, and for which he was properly qualified from the nature of his office.

† This Jehozadock was the son of Seraiah, who was put to death at Riblah.

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from father to son, it will be necessary to observe the same method with the high-priests, who, from time to time, in a continued succession under those kings, exercised the sacerdotal office.

The first high-priest after the building of Solomon's temple was Zadock.

After him came his son *Ahimaaz*, and after Ahimaaz, *Azariah*; and so forward. *Joram*, *Phineas*, *Sudeas*, *Julus*, *Jotham*, *Urias*, *Nerius*, *Oseas*, *Saldumus*, *Elcius*, *Sareas*, and *Jehozadock*, who was carried away to Babylon.

All these handed down the pontificate in a continued succession in their families, from generation to generation.

Upon the king's return to Babylon, Zedekiah was committed to prison, where he died, and afterwards had the honour of a royal sepulchre.

The holy vessels the king took out of the temple, he dedicated to his idols; allotted habitations to the people in Babylon, and set Jehozadock at liberty.

Now Nabuzar-Adan, the general, that brought away the people prisoners, left the poorer sort of people, and the deserters, under the command of *Gedaliah*, the son of *Ahikam*, an eminent person, both for generosity and justice, who allotted his prisoners a proportion of ground to improve and live upon, on condition of paying a certain tribute to the king.

The prophet Jeremiah was also (*b*) discharged from his imprisonment: and the king having given orders to the governor to take a particular care of him, Gedaliah proposed to the prophet to go with him to Babylon, as it was but reason the king should be at the charge of his journey; or if he did not approve of that place, desired he would nominate any other, and he would write to the king about it.

The prophet's answer was, that he had no mind to remove at all, but rather stay where he was, and take his part in the miserable ruins of his native country.

Nebuzar-Adan, being informed how the prophet stood affected, gave Gedaliah a strict charge to see him well provided for; made him several considerable presents himself, and so left him, and returned to Babylon.

Jeremiah upon this made choice of (*c*) Mizpah for the place of his abode, having first obtained of Nebuzar-Adan, Baruch's liberty, as well as his own, whom he took for his companion.

Baruch was the son of *Neriah*, a person nobly born, and perfectly well skilled in the language of his country.

The burning and the sacking of

(*b*) *Discharged from his imprisonment.* The prophet was treated in this respectful manner by the Chaldeans, on account of the repeated predictions he had made in the favour of that people, and the many exhortations he had given the Jews to submit to their authority.

(*c*) *Mizpah for the place of his abode.* This city, to which Jeremiah thought proper to retire, had been a place of great estimation in the time of the Judges, but falling to decay, was rebuilt many years after their time by king Asa.

It was situated on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, and was, at this time, the residence of Gedaliah.

Jerusalem, and the return of the Babylonians into their own country, was by this time made known to all the deserters that had left the city in the time of the siege; and so they gathered together from all places in throngs to Gedaliah at Mizpah.

The principal men among them were *Johanan*, the son of *Kareah*; *Jezaniah*, and *Saraiah*, with some others. And besides these, there was *Ishmael*, a person of royal blood, but of a false and malicious disposition.

This man, in the time of the siege, fled to *Bathal*, king of the Ammonites, for sanctury, where he had continued ever since.

Upon the application of these people to Gedaliah, he gave them an invitation to continue there, and to plant; for they might live quietly, and at ease, without any danger from the Babylonians, binding himself by an oath to stand by, and assist them, if any man should offer to molest, or trouble them. And for their farther encouragement he thus addressed them:

Do but you resolve among yourselves what town or place you would settle in, and you shall have some of my people with you to assist you in preparing and fitting up habitations; only you must take care not to slip the season of providing for the next vintage and harvest, that you may not want corn, wine or oil, next winter for your subsistence.

When he had given them this encouragement and assurance, he left every man at liberty to dispose of himself at his own discretion, and to chuse for his residence what place he pleased.

The report of Gedaliah's generosity, humanity, and tenderness, toward the fugitives, who had applied themselves to him for refuge, gained him so great a reputation with all the neighbouring nations, that they repaired to him from all parts, and quickly made up a considerable plantation; for they had lands assigned them, upon condition only of paying a certain acknowledgment to the king of Babylon.

Johanan and the rest of the great men had a very high esteem for the courtesy of Gedaliah to the planters, and therefore informed him in friendship and respect, that there was a conspiracy carried on against him, between the king of the Ammonites, and Ishmael; that Ishmael was to assassinate him in a treacherous manner; for being a branch of the royal family, he intended to assume the government of the Israelites.

They gave it as their opinion, that the ready way to secure Gedaliah against this practice, would be for them privately to dispatch Ishmael; which, with his leave, they would undertake, as they were afraid, if this mischief was not timely prevented, it would prove inevitably the ruin of all the Israelites, in the end.

Gedaliah informed them, that he could not believe it possible for any man to be so barbarous and ungrateful, that lay under so many obligations to the contrary; neither could it enter into his head, that a man who was never known to do any such thing under the provocation of his

his necessities, should now be in a plot to destroy that person himself, whom, by all the ties of honour and hospitality, he was obliged to defend and preserve, though with the hazard of his own life, if it should have been attempted by any other man whatsoever.

To sum up the affair he told them, that admitting the information to be true, he had much rather lose his own life, than take away the life of any man that had committed himself to his trust.

Johanan, and his companions, finding from this declaration, that all they said was to no purpose, they went away.

About thirty days after, Ishmael, with ten of his friends, paid a visit to Gedaliah at Mizpath, where they were received with all the freedom and respect imaginable. They drank very plentifully till Gedaliah and his companions were intoxicated, which the other party observing, they took the opportunity of falling upon them, and without any difficulty killed the master of the house, and all the rest of the guards.

It was now the dead of the night, and all the people, as well soldiers as others, securely asleep; so that they made the same havock in the streets, as they had done at Gedaliah's just before, destroying and murdering all they could find, whether Jews or Babylonians, without any distinction.

The next day there came up to the city a company of about four score men out of the country, with presents for Gedaliah, knowing nothing as yet of the massacre. As soon as Ishmael saw them, he called them into Gedaliah's house shut the doors upon them, and cut their throats in the palace, and caused their bodies afterward to be thrown into a pit, where they might lay concealed.

There was not a man of that number that escaped, except a few that promised to make discovery of goods, cloaths, and corn, that were concealed under ground, upon condition of their being reprieved.

Some of them were spared upon these terms; but the common people of Mizpath, men, women, and children, were all carried away; and among the rest, the daughters of Zedekiah, which Nebuzar-Adan had left, under the care of Gedaliah.

Ishmael immediately went away with the news of this exploit to the king of the Ammonites; but Johanan, with the rest of the leading men, hearing of the horrid massacre at Mizpath, and the death of Gedaliah, were so incensed, that raising all the men they could muster, by their respective influence, they joined in the pursuit of Ishmael, whom they overtook at the fountain of Hebron.

The very sight of the pursuers rejoiced the hearts of the prisoners that Ishmael was carrying away with him; for suspecting them at first sight to be friends, coming to their assistance, they went over immediately, one and all, to the party of Johanan; but Ishmael, with only eight of his companions, fled to the king of the Ammonites.

Johanan, in the mean time, with

the people he had taken from Ishmael, marched to a place that is called Mandra, and there they staid one day, thinking to fly into Egypt, lest the Babylonians, in a rage for the murder of their governor, should fall upon them; however, for their better security, they took up a resolution to consult Jeremiah, *(d)* what course to take. Accordingly they put the question to him; promising upon oath to act in strict conformity with his advice.

The prophet assured them he would do his utmost for their satisfaction; and upon the tenth day after this application, God appeared to him, and bade him go and tell Johanan, and the rest of the commanders, *That if they continued where they were, he would assist and secure them against any harm from the Babylonians, of whom they were so much afraid; but if after this warning they went into Egypt, they might expect the same fate that had befallen their brethren before them.*

This was the message the prophet delivered them by God's express direction, though they could hardly believe it to be the will of God, that they should continue where they were; taking it rather for an invention of the prophet's, in favour of Baruch his disciple, in order to expose them to the wrath of the Babylonians; so that Johanan and the rest of the people, in contempt of God's word by his prophet, went away into Egypt, and carried Jeremiah and Baruch along with them.

Upon their arrival thither, it was revealed from heaven to the prophet, that the king of Babylon should bring an army into Egypt; and Jeremiah was commanded to tell the people that *(e)* Egypt should be taken, where part of them should be killed, and afterwards the rest should be carried away captives to Babylon. For, in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the three and twentieth of Nebuchadnezzar, he made an inroad in Cæle-Syria; and upon subduing it, carried his victorious army into the country of the Ammonites and Moabites; whom he had subjected, and made a furious incursion into Egypt, killed the then reigning king, set up another in his place, and

(d) What course to take. Sufficiently humbled by the destruction of their country, and struck with the captivity of their brethren, the remnant of the Jews, who were not carried into Babylon, are awakened into a sense of Almighty Power, and an humble supplication of his mercy.

Adversity is the best school for wisdom, and the mind, though hardened in error, naturally looks up to the Divine Being, as its only support on the appearance of calamity: an observation which the behaviour of the Jews upon this occasion sufficiently verified.

(e) Egypt should be taken. The Almighty Wisdom having determined to settle the Jews among the Chaldeans for some time, till captivity had brought them to a proper knowledge of their sins, here expresses his particular disapprobation of their having any connection with the Egyptians, whom they might in reality, consider as the source of all they had suffered, since the superstitious ceremonies of that people was the principal cause of their corruption, and consequently of their being forsaken by their divine protector.

From this it must not, however, be inferred that the Chaldeans were not an idolatrous country, for on the contrary, they were equally remarkable with the Egyptians for the number of their idols; but the Jews having been before under subjection to the Egyptian empire, the Lord thought it most proper, if it may be presumed to judge of unerring wisdom, to give them a change of masters, to make a deeper impression of their disobedience, and to manifest his own power, in redeeming them out of the hands of the two most mighty empires at that time in being.

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the Jews whom he found there, were carried away a second time prisoners to Babylon.

Such was the wretched fate of the Hebrews, who, in consequence of their disobedience of the Divine Will were twice carried away beyond the Euphrates; for the ten tribes were first transported by the Assyrians out of Samaria, in the reign of Hosea; and the other two, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Chaldeans, and the Babylonians, upon the taking of Jerusalem.

Now Shalmanezer transplanted the Chuthites into the country of the Israelites, out of the heart of Media and Persia; and they were called Samaritans, from the name of the place into which they were transplanted; but the king of Babylon carried away the other two tribes, without introducing any other in their stead.

And this was the reason that Judea, with Jerusalem, and the temple, lay wholly abandoned for the space of seventy rears.

The time betwixt the captivity of the ten tribes, and the transmigration of the other two, was an hundred and thirty years, six months, and ten days.

The king of Babylon appointed a select number of Jewish youths, who were eminent for their birth, and beauty, to be trained up for the service of his court.

To this end, he procured them the best tutors that could be found, and ordered divers of them to be set apart for the practice of music vocal and instrumental.

He sent them their meat from his own table, and took great care to have them instructed in the Chaldean discipline and learning, in which they made a very considerable progress in a short time.

There were four of Zedekiah's relations in the number, whose names were Daniel, Ananias, Mishael, and Azariah; but the Babylonians changed their names, and called Daniel, *Belteſhazzar;* Ananias, *Shadrach;* Mishael, *Meſhach;* and Azariah, *Abednigo.*

The king had a great esteem for them all, both on account of the sweetness of their disposition, and the extraordinary force of their understanding.

Daniel thinking the voluptuous fate of the Babylonish court, improper for persons in the condition of himself and his countrymen: they intreated the eunuch that had the care of them, to use those delicacies which the king sent them from his own table, for the service of himself, and his family; as pulse, or dates, or any ordinary food would be to them full as satisfactory. The eunuch told them that he would willingly gratify them; but if they should grow lean, upon such an abstemious way of living, look less amiable, or appear in a less agreeable habit of body, he was afraid the king might have some suspicion of the matter, and take offence at it; which would endanger his life, especially as those who lived upon daintier food, would appear more ruddy and healthy than themselves.

As they found the eunuch not so obstinate in opposing their request as they imagined he would have been, they

they pressed him to make the experiment only for ten days; and after that time, if he found the change did not so well agree with them as their former allowance, and that they did not keep their health, colour, and habit of body, that they had before, he might bring them back again to the king's prescribed method of living.

The eunuch was prevailed upon to make trial of it; and when he found them so far from being the worse for the alteration, that they grew more vigorous upon it, both in the disposition of their bodies and minds, he made no longer a scruple of complying with their desires, but he gave them what they demanded, and kept the king's allowance to himself.

This change agreed so well with Daniel, and his friends, that, comparatively, they seemed to be better provided for than the rest, and all their faculties were better adapted, either for study or labour; being neither surfeited with variety, nor rendered effeminate by luxury.

By this temperate way of living, their spirits were kept clear and active, as appeared by the wonderful improvement in the Hebrews, as well as the Chaldean learning; but Daniel's progress was amazing, for he had got such an insight into the arts, that he took upon him the expounding of dreams, and had many times visions of his own to work upon.

About two years after the destruction of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar had a vision, and a revelation from God in his sleep, of the meaning of it. But afterwards when he came to rise from his bed, he had utterly forgot it, upon which he immediately sent for his learned men, as Chaldeans, Magi, and Prophets, and told them, that he had a strange dream, but it was now utterly out of his head, and therefore required them to tell him what it was, and what was the signification of it.

They made him answer, that as to the first part of his proposition, it was a thing not to be done. But if he would be pleased to tell them the dream, they would be answerable to give him the interpretation of it.

The king in a rage commanded them, without farther ceremony, to (*f*) tell him his dream, or they should die for it. But as they could not undertake it, they were ordered to be put to death.

When Daniel came to understand that the wise men were all to be put to death, and to reflect, that he and his relations were also in danger, upon the same account, he went to

(*f*) *Tell him his dream.* Though the Chaldeans were remarkably expert in the interpretation of dreams, which they undertook to discover by some particular remarks, as well as to foretel future events by the revolution of the heavenly bodies, yet here they declared the impossibility of knowing a dream which they never heard of, and the unreasonableness of requiring an interpretation of what the king had utterly forgot; a circumstance which they told the king was entirely unprecedented, and never demanded by any of the preceding princes on account of its impossibility.

Arioch, the captain of the king's guards, to learn what crime they were condemned for.

The captain informed him, that the king had a dream, which he himself had forgotten, and that they were to die, because they could not tell him what it was.

Daniel made answer, that if he could procure them a reprieve for one night only, he would not despair of giving him the satisfaction he required; for he had some hope that God would that very night be prevailed upon to enable him to do it.

The captain gave the king an account of this proposal; whereupon the execution was respited, to try what good was to be done upon that experiment.

Daniel with his companions, went into his bed-chamber, and spent that whole night in prayer to God, for the means of resolving the question, and for the delivering those people from death, that were now fallen under the king's displeasure, by laying before him the particulars of the last night's dream, which was now out of his memory.

God was pleased upon the intercession of Daniel, both in compassion to the miserable, and out of tenderness for the prudence of Daniel's meditation, to make known, not only the dream itself, but the signification of it; to the end, that he might communicate the whole matter to the king.

Daniel was so transported with this revelation, that he got up early in the morning, gave his brethren a word of comfort, being now brought to the last point of despair, and thinking of nothing but death, bade them take courage, and hope the best, for that all things were now secure.

When they had given God thanks together, for his fatherly care and pity over them, Daniel went to Arioch by break of day, to carry him to the king, with assurance he should now have all the particulars laid before him of his late dream.

Upon Daniel's admittance to the king, he first informed him, "That "it was not conceit he entertained of "his own wisdom, as if he knew "more than the Chaldeans and the "Magi; or any design of a reproach "upon them, for not being able to "resolve a question which he could "explain, that made him engage in "this matter; for, said he, I am not "a person to pretend to more skill "and understanding than my neighbours, but it is purely the work of "God, in pity to the miserable, and "in mercy to my prayers, for the "lives and safety of myself and my "friends, that he hath revealed this "dream to me, and laid open the "meaning of it.

"I have not been so solicitous for "the safety of myself, and my companions under your displeasure, "as for your honour and glory; in "case of putting so many good and "worthy men to death, contrary to "right and justice, merely for not "being able to do a thing which it is "utterly impossible for flesh and "blood to do; or for any but a supernatural power to accomplish.

"You were thinking with your-

"self what would become of the em-
"pire of the world when you were
"gone, and who should succeed to
"it. Now the dream you had was a
"kind of a resolution upon that en-
"quiry; for God shewed you in your
"sleep those that were to rule after
"you. You dreamt you saw a large
"image, or statue, standing upright;
"the (*g*) head was gold; the should-
"ers and arms silver; the belly and
"the thighs brass; the legs and the
"feet, iron. You saw then a stone
"broken off from a mountain that
"fell upon this image, overthrew it,
"and broke it so small, that the dust
"of the gold, silver, brass, and iron,
"was as light as chaff, and carried
"away by a blast of wind to the fur-
"thermost parts of the earth, the
"stone growing so large during this
"time, that it lay like a mountain on
"the face of the earth. This was
"your dream, and I come now to
"the interpretation of it. By the
"golden head is signified yourself,
"and other kings of Babylon before
"you: the two hands and shoulders
"portend that two kings shall de-
"stroy your empire; and afterward,
"their empire will be subverted by
"another king coming from the west
"in armour of brass, and he is to be
"subdued afterward by another in
"iron; which, in its nature, is stronger
"than gold, silver, or brass, and not
"to be resisted."

Nebuchadnezzar, with astonishment acknowledged this to be his dream, and falling upon his face, adored Daniel like a God, and appointed divine honours to be paid him: nay he was not satisfied without giving him the name of god, he also made him ruler over the whole province, joining several of his kindred with him in the same commission. This promotion was followed with such envy upon Daniel and his relations, that it had like to have cost them all their lives by a disgust the king took upon the following occasion.

He had caused to be made an (*h*) image of gold, sixty cubits in height, and six in breadth, and placed it in the great plain of Babylon, he called together, upon the dedication of it, the princes, the great men and officers out of all his dominions; mak-

(*g*) *Head was gold.* It is not a little remarkable, with how much clearness and perspicuity the prophet here describes the properties of which the image was composed, and the reference it bore to the four most celebrated empires that ever were erected.

By the golden head is to be understood Babylon, which had then arrived at the summit of its splendor and glory.

By the silver breast and arms, the Persian monarchy, as the next in greatness and power at that time.

By the brass is meant the Grecian or Macedonian empire, as being less in value than the Persian, and not so strong as the Roman, which is always compared to iron, and frequently made use of in that sense by the prophets.

(*h*) *Image of gold.* Notwithstanding the Babylonish monarch had entertained a high opinion of Daniel's wisdom, and the greatness of his God, yet he was too much attached to his own system of worship to be regulated by the prophet's most earnest advice to forsake it.

In this place he erects a statue in honour of the guardian deity of the nation, named *Bel*, from which he thought proper to stile *Daniel Belteshazzar*, as supposing him to border near upon divinity, and to have a degree of divinity only inferior to that God.

Diodorus Secidus, speaking of the amazing plunder which *Xerxes* found in the temple of his idol, after the conquest of Babylon, mentions a statue of solid gold, forty feet high, which the generality of commentators suppose to be this very image.

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ing proclamation, that immediately upon hearing the sound of a trumpet, they should all fall down and (*i*) worship this image; and that whoever refused it, should be cast into the fiery furnace. Upon the sounding of this trumpet, all the people fell down and worshipped, except Daniel's three friends, who refusing to do it, from a reverence to the laws of their country, and the religion of the true God, were informed against, and cast into the fire; but by a merciful Providence, and beyond all human imagination, their lives were preserved, as if the flame itself had been conscious of the injustice of the sentence, and suspended its natural effect in favour of the innocent; for they were not so much as scorched with it.

This extraordinary interposition of Divine Providence in their behalf, enhanced them greatly in the esteem of the king, who afterwards conferred on them many signal tokens of his favours.

Soon after this amazing event, Nebuchadnezzar had another dream, as surprising as the former; which was, that, "being driven away from "his kingdom he lived seven years "among the beasts of the forest, "and was afterwards restored to his "former state and dignity."

The king put the question again to the Magi upon this vision also; but Daniel was the only person again who could expound it: and accordingly to his prediction, it succeeded in the event; for "after seven years "of his life spent in an insociable so-"litude, without any person's daring "to make any attempt upon his go-"vernment, God, by his prayers, "was prevailed upon to re-instate "him in the exercise of his kingly "power."

This king appears from a review of his life to have been an active prince, and much more fortunate than any of his ancestors. He died in the three and fortieth year of his age. *Berosus*, in the third book of his Chaldean history, makes mention of him in these words:

"*Nebuchodonosor* the father, un-"derstanding that a certain great of-"ficer of his, to whom he had com-"mitted the government of Egypt, "*Cœle-Syria*, and *Phœnicia*, was fal-"len off from his allegiance, and not "being in a condition of body him-"self to bear the fatigues of the war "in his own person, he sent his son "Nebuchodonosor, with part of his "army, to reduce him to his obedi-"ence. He found him out; fought "and overcame him, and so reduced "the revolted provinces to their duty. "The father in the mean time was "taken away by a sickness at Ba-"bylon, in the one and twentieth "year of his reign. The young

(*i*) *Worship this image.* When we consider the strictness observed even in the superstitious worship of the ancients, and the punishments decreed for the least inattention to it, we have a melancholy retrospect to make upon our own times, where, though we have been so highly blessed with the benefits of the gospel, that we not only act in manifest contradiction to its tenets, but presume to ridicule, controvert, and despise them.

The merits of a suffering Saviour are treated with contempt, and his very existence disputed by some members of his church, who should be the first, from the nature of their office, to adore his mission; and propagate his laws.

"prince

" prince was no sooner informed of " the death of his father, but he took " immediate care for the settling of " his affairs in Egypt, and the rest of " the provinces; recommending to " some particular friends the charge " of conveying his prisoners, Jews, " Syrians, Phœnicians, and Egyptians, to Babylon, with the army, " and baggage; while he himself, " with a small retinue, took his way " thither over the desart. The government was reserved for him in " the mean while, by the Chaldeans; " and by the great men among them, " in his absence, secured till his return. So that when he came to " enter upon the administration, he " was established in the full possession of his paternal empire. The " first thing he did was to make a " commodious distribution of his " captives into colonies; and after " that, to adorn and illustrate the " temple of Belus, and other religious places, with the spoils of war. " He repaired and enlarged the ancient edifices of the city, and raised " works upon the banks of the river, " to prevent all approaches that way. " He erected three walls or retrenchments, within the bounds of the " city, and as many without, all brick " work; and when he had fortified " the town after this remarkable " manner, he beautified the gates " with a curious frontispiece, like " the finishing of the temple work; " and erected another palace contiguous to that of his father, with " great art and magnificence. In " this building there were vast stones " supported upon arches, that looked like mountains hanging in the " air: and they were planted on the " top, with several sorts of trees, " in a compliment to the queen, " who being a Median, had a passionate desire to see some artificial " resemblance of the gardens and " rarities of her own country."

Megasthenes, in the fourth volume of his history of India, speaks of these garden works, and sets forth this king, both for his enterprize, and for his performances, to have been much superior to *Hercules* himself. having dubdued the greatest part of Lybia, and likewise Iberia. *Diocles* makes mention of this king in the second book of his Persian history; and *Philostratus*, in the account he gives of the Phœnicians and the Indians; writes that this prince, in the days of *Ithobal* king of Tyre, maintained a siege of thirteen years against that town.

CHAP. IV.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SUCCESSOR RELEASES KING JEHOIACHIN. BABYLON IS BESIEGED BY CYRUS AND DARIUS. DANIEL EXPOUNDS A VISION TO KING BELSHAZZAR. TAKING OF BABYLON. DANIEL OBTAINS THE FAVOUR OF DARIUS. GOD WORKS MANY DELIVERANCES FOR THE PROPHET, AND ENABLES HIM TO PERFORM MANY WONDERS.

EVIL-MERODACH who succeeded to the throne of Babylon, on the demise of Nebuchadnezzar his father, immediately on his accession released Jehoiachin, honoured

noured him with many presents, took him into his confidence, and made him the chief governor of his palace. His father indeed had broken his faith shamefully with this prince, in making him a prisoner after he had so frankly delivered up himself, his wife, children, and all his relations upon honour only, for the saving of his country from uttter ruin.

Evil-Merodach died in the eighteenth year of his reign. His son *Nigliſar* succeeded him; and when he had reigned forty years, the kingdom fell by succession to his son *Laboſardochus*, who kept it only nine months: and after his death, it devolved on *Belſhazzar*, by the Babylonians called *Naboandel*.

Cyrus the king of the Persians, and *Darius* the king of the Medes, made war upon this prince; and while they lay before Babylon, there appeared to Belshazzar an extraordinary vision. As he was at supper, with his curtiers and concubines about him, together with all the splendid apparatus of a princely table, he called, in a frolick, for the sacred vessels out of his own temple, which Nebuchadnezzar deposited there, upon rifling the temple at Jerusalem, though he never had put them to any prophane or private use.

Belshazzar was now warm in his cups, and entertaining himself and his company, with prophane speeches against the majesty of the true God; when in the height of his jollity there appeared a hand, writing certain syllables upon the walls, which put the king into such terror, that he immediately called a council of cunning men and Chaldeans, and all sorts of diviners, (who among those barbarians value themselves upon a faculty of disclosing the meaning of prodigies, and the interpretation of dreams,) to find out the purport of the words that were there written upon the plaister. They laid their heads together, and after a long consultation, frankly declared they understood nothing of the matter.

Upon this the king from his anxiety, caused a proclamation to be published all over his dominions, with promise of a golden chain, the privilege of a royal purple robe, and the third place of rule in his kingdom, to any man that should give him the interpretation of that writing. In consequence of this proclamation, the wise men assembled, and exerted their utmost efforts to obtain the proffered reward, without the least degree of success.

While the king was under the greatest anxiety concerning this perplexing circumstance, the queen informed him for his comfort, that there was a certain Jew among the prisoners that Nebuchadnezzar had brought away with him upon the destruction of Jerusalem, who was deemed a man of great wisdom, and so wonderfully skilled in solving of difficulties and intricate questions, that he appeared to be under the direction of a divine spirit.

She also told him that Nebuchadnezzar made use of him for his interpreter in the like cases; when no one else was able to resolve him; wherefore she desired the king by all means to send for Daniel, enquire of him

him about that writing, and give him encouragement to speak the truth, though it should portend something dreadful to himself.

Upon this advice Belshazzar caused Daniel to be sent for; professing indeed, that he had heard of the penetration and understanding of that man, and of the spirit of divination with which he was possessed; and that he took him to be the most likely person in the world to divine the truth of a matter which no body else could interpret.

Upon Daniel's being brought, the king put him the question, with an assurance, that all the promises in his proclamation should be made good to him, upon his solution of it: which would make him famous all over the world, wherever it should be known, that he had these honours done him for his wisdom.

Daniel excused himself from the receiving any (*k*) gifts or honours. *For wisdom,* says he, *is a divine faculty, and not to be corrupted or prophaned with bribes, but be ever ready to serve those that stand in need of it.*

This writing foretells that your death is at hand; for you should have taken warning by the judgments that befel your great ancestor, for his contempt of God, and have applied yourself to a religious course of life.

You know well, continued he, *that Nebuchadnezzar was banished the society of mankind, and condemned to the condition of a beast; but afterward it pleased God, upon his earnest prayers and repentance, to restore him to the conversation of men, and to the exercise of his former government, which infinite mercy and Providence of God he adored and celebrated afterwards all the days of his life.*

But for your part, you are so far from being wrought upon by this example in your family, that you blaspheme God to his face, and take a pride in prophaning the vessels of his holy altar, in your debauches with your harlots.

By this lewd course of impiety, you have drawn the wrath of God upon your head; and the intent of this writing is only to shew what you are to come to.

Mene, *which is as much as number, signifies that the days both of your life and of your reign are numbered; and that you have but a short time to live.*

Tekel, *or weight, gives you to understand, that your reign is weighed in the balance, and being found wanting, is drawing to a conclusion.*

Peres, *or a fragment, pretends, that your kingdom shall be devided, and given to the Medes and Persians.*

The king was most terribly mortified with this interpretation; yet nothwith-

(*k*) *Gifts of honour.* Here is a Scripture and glorious instance of the meanness of bribery and corruption.

Here was none of Balaam's spirit; on going to court and humouring and gratifying a prince's passion, or coming into his waked policies for gifts and promotion. Daniel served him disinterestedly, and in the course of his service, his eyes not being blinded with gifts, he faithfully and courageously, and honestly pointed out to him the faults he saw in his conduct, and what were the occasion of his approaching, as of his predecessor's misfortunes.

notwithstanding he was so just and generous, as to make good to Daniel all that he had promised him, though the foreteller of his ruin; considering with himself, that it was not the prophet's fault, but his own unhappy lot, that he could tell him no better tidings; neither could he deny but that Daniel had acted the part of a just and a good man, in letting him know the truth of things, though deplorable in the event.

Soon after the prophet's interpretation, both himself and the city fell into the power of Cyrus; for Babylon was taken in the seventeenth year of the reign of Belshazzar, who is said to have been the last king of Nebuchadnezzar's family.

Darius was sixty-two years of age, when, with the assistance of Cyrus, his kinsman, he effected the subversion of the Babylonian empire.

This Cyrus was the son of *Astyages*, though known among the Greeks by another name. He took the prophet Daniel with him into Media, and held him in great estimation; for he made him one of the three chief governors, that had three hundred and sixty more under them, according to the original constitution of Darius.

Darius had so great a reverence for Daniel, that he consulted him upon all occasions, as an oracle, and would hardly resolve upon any matter of moment without his advice. But it fell out with Daniel, as we find it in the case of other princes favourites; the confident that is most in credit, never fails of drawing upon himself the envy of all the rest.

Daniel was so well aware of these court stratagems, and kept so strict a guard upon himself that there was no laying hold of any opportunity against him.

As to bribes, he had a soul so much above any temptation of that kind, that he made conscience of receiving even a lawful acknowledgment for a good office. But this did not hinder his enemies from plotting his destruction, which they endeavoured to effect in the following manner.

Having observed that Daniel prayed to God constantly, thrice a day, his adversaries studied how they should avail themselves of this pious practice to his ruin. They applied themselves to Darius, in the name of his council and state officers; and requested that he would be pleased so far to indulge his people; as to pass an edict only for thirty days, that whosoever should presume to ask any thing of God or man, within that compass of time, should be cast into the lion's den.

The king was so short-sighted, as not to see through the malice of this contrivance; and that the very proposal struck at the life of Daniel: so that he assented to the motion, promised a confirmation of it, and ordered the publication of the decree, as an act passed by himself and his council.

This decree so severe and peremptory, greatly alarmed the people, who all desisted, even from the duties they owed their God. But Daniel, regardless of all that man could do, continued the regular exercise of his

his devotion, and submitted the event to the pleasure and direction of an All-Wise Providence.

This way of proceeding furnished his enemies with a pretence that they had long waited for; therefore immediately they informed the king, that Daniel was the only man, who in contempt of his royal proclamation, worshipped contrary to the tenor and direction of the decree, and that he did not do this out of piety, but from a spirit of contradiction and defiance to the authority of the edict.

The envy of Daniel's enemies was the more outrageous, upon the apprehension they had that the king's personal respect for him might incline him to pass over the affront; so they pressed him with clamours and outcries, not to be resisted, for justice upon the malafactor; nay, they insisted, that he should be immediately thrown into the lion's den.

Darius was forced to yield to the violence of these importunities, but told Daniel for his comfort in his extremity, that rather than so good a man should perish, God would yet work some miracle for his relief. So Daniel was cast into the lion's den, and a great stone laid at the mouth of it, which the king (*l*) sealed with his own signet, and returned to his palace.

He passed that night, fasting and waking: for his anxious concern for Daniel would not suffer him either to eat or sleep; but early in the morning he arose and went to the den, where he found every thing as he had left it, and the seal untouched.

He then called upon Daniel by his name, at a grate that looked down into the den, to know if he were living; to which he made answer, that he was safe and well.

Then the king immediately ordered him to be taken out, but his inveterate enemies insisted on his continuance in the den. However it was ordered by Divine Providence, that he received not the least hurt.

The king was so incensed at the malignity of those people, that he ordered as much meat to be given the lions as they could devour; and when they would eat no longer, to turn (*m*) Daniel's accusers in among them. Observing, that if they did not devour them, it would be because their bellies were full. But if they did, it must be allowed to be the immediate hand of God that preserved Daniel.

In fine, the lions tore them in pieces in an instant, and with as much

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(*l*) *Sealed with his own signet.* Darius, in all probability, at the time of signing this decree, either forgot that he exposed his favourite, Daniel, to the machinations of his enemies, or was ignorant of his religious principles; for it is scarcely to be supposed he would have consented to any thing prejudicial to the interest of a man for whom he entertained so perfect a frindship and esteem.

(*m*) *Daniel's accusers in among them.* The ancients were remarkably rigid in their punishments, and condemned the near relations of any criminal to death, from a notion that so extraordinary a degree of severity might restrain the commission of offences, since few would be ready to undertake any action that would expose their families to ruin, however regardless they might be of themselves.

This cruel law had been abolished amongst the Jews, in the time of Moses, who decreed that the punishment of transgressions should be entirely confined to the offender.

eagerness

eagerness as if they had been starved with hunger; or rather, as if the beasts themselves were become the ministers of God's justice upon these workers of iniquity.

Having thus made the enemies of Daniel a dreadful example to others, Darius published a decree through his whole empire, commanding his people to acknowledge the God of Daniel to be the only true and Almighty God; and at the same time multiplied honours upon the prophet himself, in preference to all the rest of his friends and favourites.

Daniel, by this conduct, having gained the universal esteem as a person highly in favour both with God and man; he erected a stately fabric at Echatan, the capital of Media; a work remarkable for its beauty and magnificence *.

There are other passages in the history of Daniel, which are yet more admirable and particular, and demand peculiar attention. He had this singular blessing attending him, beside his excellent gift of prophecy, that he lived in a high degree of reputation, both with king and people; and at his death left a character that reflects everlasting honour on his memory; for we find by his writings, God communed with him in a very express manner; and revealed to him not only the sum and substance of things to come, (as was usual to other prophets,) but the very time when such or such an event should come to pass.

And whereas other prophets were more exercised in the foreboding of calamities, and consequently drew upon themselves envy and ill-will, both from princes and people, Daniel conciliated the esteem of both, made friends of both, by the good things he told them, which they took delight to hear; and then as to the certainty of the event, all are agreed, that he spoke from the dictate of an infallible spirit, as may be abundantly gathered also from the writings which this great prophet hath left behind him.

To justify this observation we cite the particulars of a vision, as related by himself, "It fell out, as I was taking the air one day, with some of my companions at Susa, the metropolis of Persia, that we were surprised all on a sudden with an earthquake. My friends ran away in a fright, and left me alone, fallen prostrate upon the ground, in consternation and amazement."

"While I was in this posture, some body, methought, came, took hold on me, bade me rise, and take good notice of things; for I should see wonderful revolutions that would befal my countrymen several ages to come."

"Upon my arising, I saw a large ram, with several horns, and the last taller than the rest. Turning my face then towards the west, I saw a goat that passed through the air, and encountered the ram, struck him down twice, and trampled him under his feet.'

* This tower is famous for being the royal monument of the kings of the Medes, Persians, and Parthians, to which use it is still applied, and the place likewise committed to the custody of a Jewish priest to this very day.

"After this there arose a large horn out of the forehead of the goat; and when it was broken, there sprang up four more instead of it, pointing toward the four quarters of the heavens."

"Daniel writes also, that from one of them came forth a little horn, which growing up, should wage war with the nation of the Jews, and destroy Jerusalem itself, suppress the ceremonies of the temple, and all sacrifices, for the space of twelve hundred and ninety-six days.

This was the vision that, as Daniel writes, he saw at Susa, which was first shewed by a revelation from God, and then interpreted after this following manner:

"By the ram was designed the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians, by the horns, the succeeding kings that should rule over those people, and the last of their kings, by the last horn, as transcending all the rest in wealth, and power; by the goat was signified some king of Greece, that should twice totally defeat the Persians, and subdue that empire; by the great horn upon the forehead of the goat, was meant the first of their kings; and by the budding out of four horns more, pointing to the four winds, were to be understood the successors to those kings, and the partition of their dominions, after the death of the first, though strangers to the blood; but that however they should reign for several years; and in process of time, out of these should come a king that would make war upon the Jewish nation, and utterly extinguish the form of the commonwealth, pillage the temple, and prohibit any sacrifices or worship in it for three years.

This prediction was verified under *Antiochus Epiphanes*, according to the exact manner in which the prophet foretold every minute circumstance. He wrote several wonderful things also about the Roman empire, and especially of the desolation they should make of the Israelites: all which he received by divine revelation, and transmitted in writing to posterity, to stand as a testimony upon record, of the agreement betwixt the presage and the event.

The exact fulfillment of the predictions of the prophets is an irrefragable argument of the super-intendance of a divine Providence over human affairs, and refutes that system which blindly as well as impiously inculcates, that the whole course of sublunary events is a meer huddle of contingency, without any primary effective cause. The distance of time also from the predictions in general to their completion, plainly indicates that they could not be fabulous or causual, and demonstrates that they were truly delivered as inspired by the most intuitive knowledge and unerring wisdom.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY. PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE. ARTAXERXES PUTS A STOP TO THAT PIOUS WORK. DIES SOON AFTER. THE MAGI RULES FOR THE SPACE OF ONE YEAR, AFTER WHICH, DARIUS IS CHOSEN KING. PERMITS THE CONTINUANCE OF THE BUILDING, AND PROMOTES THE DESIGN AGAINST THE OPPOSITION OF THE SAMARITANS.

IN the first year of Cyrus, and the seventieth of the Babylonish captivity, it pleased God in compassion to a wretched people, according to what he had foretold them by the prophet Jeremiah, before the destruction of Jerusalem; that is to say, that after seventy years bondage under Nebuchadnezzar, and his successors, they should be restored to their own country; see the temple rebuilt, and return to their former state of eminence and grandeur.

This was accordingly effected; for God put it into the heart of Cyrus, to send his circular letters over all Asia, to this effect, signing them, Cyrus the king.

" I do fully persuade myself, that the great God, of whose gift and bounty I hold my empire, is the very God that the children of Israel adore; for I find honourable mention made of my name by his prophets of ancient date, as a person that in time to come should rebuild Jerusalem, and re-instate the people".

Cyrus, it seems, had seen and read the prophecies of Isaiah, which bore date two hundred and ten years before he was born, wherein he gives an account of a revelation he had from God, *That he would raiſe up one Cyrus, to be a king of many, and of powerful nations, who ſhould reeſtabliſh the Hebrews in their native country.*

This was foretold by the prophet a hundred and forty years before the temple was destroyed.

The king was so transported upon the reading of these divine predictions concerning himself, that he immediately gave orders for the bringing about their accomplishment. To promote this pious design, he called together all the leading men of the Jews to Babylon; where he told them that so many of them as were disposed to return into their own country, should have free passports, and permission to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem, if they thought fit, as he made no doubt but that God would bless them in the undertaking, promising over and above, that he would send his orders to all his officers and governors, bordering upon Judea, to furnish them with gold and silver, for the rebuilding of the temple, and beasts for sacrifices.

The most eminent of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with the priests and Levites, immediately upon this declaration, hastened away toward Jerusalem. But there were a great many, however, that chose rather to stay in Babylon, than to quit their possessions.

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Upon their arrival at Jerusalem, all the king's friends and officers contributed largely and unanimously toward the great work. Some gave gold, others silver, and some cattle; others attended the discharge of their vows, and the solemnity of oblations as if they were already entered upon the business of re-erecting the city, and in the exercise of their ancient discipline.

Now Cyrus had sent them from Babylon, the holy vessels and utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from the temple at Jerusalem, which were delivered to Mithredath, the king's treasurer, and by him to be deposited with Sheshbazzar, till the temple should be finished, and then immediately to be put into the hands of priests and magistrates for the use and service of the temple.

Cyrus, after this, wrote another letter to the governor of Syria, in the following manner.

CYRUS THE KING, TO SYSINA AND SARABASAN, GREETING.

BE it known unto you, that I have given leave to all the Jews that are in my dominions, to return into their own country, and there to rebuild their capital city, with the holy temple at Jerusalem, in the same place where it sood before.

I have likewise sent my treasurer, Mithredath, and Zorobabel, the governor of Judea, to superintend the building, and to see it raised six hundred cubits upwards from the ground, and as many over. The walls to be three rows of polished stone, and one of the wood of the country, together with an altar for the sacrifices; and all this to be done at my own charge.

I have also appointed my own treasurer Mithredath, and Zorobabel, the prince of Judea, to cause all utensils and vessels that Nebuchadnezzar carried away from the temple at Jerusalem, to be sent back, and restored. That is to say, fifty golden ewers, and four hundred silver ones. Fifty golden vessels, and four hundred silver ones. Fifty golden lavers, and five hundred silver ones. Thirty golden chalices, and three hundred silver ones. Thirty golden phials, and two thousand four hundred silver ones. Beside a thousand of other large vessels of different sorts.

It is my further pleasure also, that they receive entire to themselves all the profits and revenues that were formerly enjoyed by their predecessors; and that they have an allowance paid them of two hundred and fifty thousand five hundred drachma's, in consideration of beasts for sacrifices, wine and oil; and two thousand five hundred measures of wheat, in lieu of the fine flour. And all this to be raised upon the tribute of Samaria.

The priests alone are to offer up the sacrifices according to the laws and ceremonies of Moses; and to pray daily for the king and the royal family, and for the welfare and happiness of the Persian empire.

Let no man presume to do any thing contrary to the tenor of this my royal will and proclamation, upon pain of forfeiting life and estate.

This was the substance of the king's

king's letter. And the number of those that returned out of captivity to Jerusalem; upon this encouragement and invitation, was forty two thousand four hundred and sixty two persons.

The Jews, upon their return from captivity, had no sooner entered upon the grateful, though arduous employ, of rebuilding the temple, than the neighbouring nations, and especially the Cuthites, which Shalmanezer, the king of Assyria, had formerly transplanted from Persia to Media into Samaria, after he had removed the Israelites into other habitations, applied themselves to the princes and governors, to whom the care of this enterprize was committed, pressing them with great importunity, not to suffer the Jews upon any terms, to proceed upon the project of rebuilding the city and temple.

These commissioners were prevailed upon, by bribes and fair words, to slacken their diligence in the dispatch and prosecution of their orders; and during the course of this delay, Cyrus was so taken up in war with the Massagetes (where he lost his life) that he could not attend to the execution of the work, and knew nothing at all of the matter.

Upon the death of Cyrus, Artaxerxes succeeded to the empire, and had an address presented him from Syria and Phenice, and from the Ammonites, Moabites, and Samaritans. The tenor of it was as follows:

This is to give you, great sir, to understand, that the Jews who were carried away to Babylon, are now returned to their former seats, and into our country, where they are busy upon the rebuilding of a city that was most deservedly destroyed for seditious practices.

They are setting up markets, and places of commerce; repairing the walls, and renewing the temple; and if they persist in these works, you may assure yourself, that they will never submit to serve, if they once get it into their power to command.

We account it our duty, sir, in this heat and zeal, for the rebuilding of the temple, to lay before you the true state of the case, before it is too late.

Review the history of your predecessors, and you shall there find the Jews from generation to generation, to be the enemies of all crowned heads; and that this very city was justly laid waste and desolate, for the crime of rebellion.

And we are further to lay before you, that it appears to us, from divers concurring circumstances, that if they are permitted to carry their present design into execution, you will find your communication cut off with Phenice and Celo-Syria.

Artaxerxes, by nature turbulent and impetuous, was incensed beyond degree at these representations; and therefore returned the states the following answer:

KING ARTAXERXES TO RATHUMUS HIS HISTORIOGRAPHER; BEELTETHMUS AND SEMELLIUS, THE SCRIBE, AND OTHER INHABITANTS OF SAMARIA, AND PHENICE, GREETING.

UPON the reading of your letter of addreſs, I have cauſed a diligent ſearch to be made into the hiſtory of former times, according to your requeſt, and I find your remarks upon the city of Jeruſalem to be true, and the Jews have ever been a rebellious, and anti-monarchial ſort of people; turbulent and reſtleſs, and naturally addicted to innovations.

I find likewiſe, that their kings have ever been fierce and violent, and extortionate in their taxes and impoſitions, to the higheſt degree of oppreſſion, as Phenice and Celo-Syria may witneſs againſt them.

Wherefore I do command you to oppoſe them with all your might, in the rebuilding of the city; for as they grow in power, they will certainly increaſe in malice, and behave themſelves as ſeditiouſly to the preſent governors, as they have done in times paſt to former kings.

Rathumus and Semellius, the king's scribes, had no sooner read this mandate, than they set out, with many others, for Jerusalem; whither having arrived with the utmost expedition, they put an absolute stop, both to the rebuilding the city and the temple; so that it was retarded from that period, to the second year of Darius, the king of Persia.

Artaxerxes, after he had reigned six years, and subdued Egypt, died at Damascus, in his return from that expedition.

The Magi being cut off, in whose hands, for a full year after his death, the government rested; it was afterwards translated by the seven Satrapœ or eminent families of the Persians, and by common consent conferred on Darius, the son of Hystaspes.

Darius, before he arrived at the regal dignity, made a solemn vow to the Lord, that if ever he came to the throne, he would send all the holy vessels that were at Babylon to the temple at Jerusalem; and it happened about that time, that Zerubbabel, who was declared the prince or captain of the Jewish captives, came from Jerusalem to Darius.

Zerubbabel was admitted into the king's peculiar favour and confidence, and together with two other great men, vested with the highest offices of state.

Darius, in the first year of his reign, gave a splendid and magnificent entertainment, not only to his own courtiers, but to the princes and nobility of the Medes and Persians, the general officers of all India and Ethiopia, and the commanders, of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces.

Upon the breaking up of the company, when the entertainment was over, they retired every man to his own quarters. And Darius, in the mean while finding, after a short slumber, that he could not compose himself, fell into discourse on different topics, with his three favourite officers telling them in the end, *That he had ſome queſtions to aſk them; and for*

*for their encouragement, he that ſhould give him the moſt reaſonable and ſatisfactory anſwer ſhould have the honour to be cloathed in purple, drink in a golden cup, ſleep upon gold, ride in a chariot with harneſs of gold, wear a ſilk * Tiara, and a golden chain; have the next place to himſelf in council, and be accounted as one of the royal blood.*

After this, he put his questions to them in order. To the first, if there was any thing stronger than wine? To the second, the same question again, of the strength of kings? And to the third, what he thought of the strength of women? Or, finally, of truth, perhaps, above all the rest.

Upon the putting of these queries to them, he left his officers to consider of the matter.

Early in the morning, he called together all the princes of the Medes and Persians, with the chief officers and governors, placed himself upon the seat of justice, and caused the guards of his body to be sent for immediately, while they gave their opinions severally and publicly upon what he had proposed.

The first began upon the subject of the strength of wine; thus addressing the assembly.

I take upon me to pronounce wine ſuperior to all other powers whatſoever. For it intoxicates the minds and underſtandings of all thoſe that drink too plentifully of it.

It puts the greateſt prince into the condition of a child.

It ſets the ſlave at liberty, even to the forgetting of his chains; and makes the beggar as rich and as great as an emperor.

It changes and elevates the ſpirits, wherever it takes poſſeſſion.

It enlivens the heavy hearts of the miſerable; pays all debts; and relieves men in all manner of neceſſities.

It makes the mean puſillanimous wretch, affect the air of the brave and noble, without reſpect to things or perſons.

It makes men forget their moſt intimate familiars and friends, and ungratefully treat their neareſt relations, as if they were the moſt hateful ſtrangers; and then when a perſon has recovered from a debauch, he remembers not what he did in the heat of liquor. For which reaſon I cannot but look upon wine as ſtrongeſt in its effect.

When the first had finished his discussion of the power of wine; the second stood up for the power of king's, in preference to all other, which he endeavoured to prove after this manner.

It is beyond diſpute, that God has made man maſter of all things under the ſun, ſo far as to command them, to make uſe of them, and apply them to neceſſary purpoſes of life; but whereas men have only a dominion over other ſublunary creatures, kings have an authority even over men themſelves, and a right of ruling them ſuperior to thoſe that are maſters of all things elſe, hath a juſt title to pre-

* This was a rich ornament for the head, worn by emperors, kings, and great personages among the eastern people in former times.

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cedence, and to be accounted ſupreme, having no earthly things above them.

When princes find it convenient to expoſe the perſons of their ſubjects to wars and dangers, they obey them, without any reluctance, let the hazard be what it will; whether bodies to bodies, or in the attack of walls or works, forcing of paſſes, or as it often happens, in contending with nature itſelf. We ſee how frankly they offer themſelves either to kill or be killed, in the execution of their princely orders; and then in caſe of a victory at laſt, the honour and profit of the whole redounds to the king.

Thus much for the military part; and the ſame reaſon holds good in the common buſineſs of life, whether the countryman plows, ſows, digs, and ſweats, to ſupply the king's ſtores out of his toil and labour, or whatſoever he commands, it muſt be obeyed, without expoſtulation or delay.

The king, while the people are thus labouring for him, takes his fill of every delicate pleaſure, ſleeps in ſecurity, with his guards about him, under an indiſpenſable obligation of the cloſeſt and moſt watchful attendance; nor dares a man amongſt them cloſe his eyes while his maſter is at reſt; for the king's buſineſs is theirs, without any ſort of liberty to attend to any other; ſo that nothing certainly can be ſtronger than the force of that power which the whole multitude obeys to all intents and purpoſes.

After this declamation upon the power of kings, Zerubbabel stood up in vindication of women and truth, and thus enforced his argument.

The power of wine is not to be denied, neither is that of kings, that ties up ſo many millions of men in one common bond of allegiance; but the ſuper-eminence of women, notwithſtanding, exceeds all this; for the mother of the king was before the king himſelf, and kings are but the gifts of the women, who brought them into the world; and women are likewiſe the mothers and nurſes of thoſe that cultivate our vineyards and dreſs our vines.

There is not any thing we can pretend to, but what we either directly or indirectly receive from them.

They have a hand in the government of our domeſtic affairs; nay, in the dreſs and ornament of our bodies; and, in fine, God hath made them ſo neceſſary to us, that we cannot live without them.

The ſight of a beautiful woman conſtrains a man to ſacrifice his property, and his moſt daring attachments to the poſſeſſion of her charms.

Women have the power to make us abandon our very country and relations, and frequently to forget the beſt friends we have in the world; and forſake every other comfort, to live and die with them.

I may further add, that when we have compaſſed ſea and land, for every thing that is rich and curious in nature, do not we reſign all to the diſpoſal of ſome woman, who reigns ſole miſtreſs of our hearts? How have I ſeen a king in the very meridian of his glory, ſubmit to the higheſt indignity, from the hand of his concubine? Nor was this all, for ſhe would take

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the crown from the king's head, and ſet it upon her own; and he, weak man, was ſo infatuated with her beauty, as to condeſcend to any fooleſy, in order to pleaſe her, or ſuffer himſelf to be treated juſt as her caprice might direct.

The princes and nobility were not a little amazed at the freedom used by Zerubbabel in vindication of his argument; however, he proceeded to the discussion of the last point, which was the article of truth.

I have delivered my opinion upon the ſubject of women. But after all, neither they nor kings are comparable to the irreſiſtable force of truth. For allowing the vaſt magnitude of the earth, the heighth of the heavens, and the unſpeakable ſwiftneſs of the motion of the ſun, and that all this is ordered by a divine hand, it muſt be granted withal, that God is juſt and true; and conſequently that truth is of all things imaginable, the moſt powerful, ſince neither error or juſtice can prevail againſt it.

As for every thing elſe that paſſes for great in the world, they are mortal and ſhort-lived, but truth alone is unchangeable and everlaſting; the benefits we receive from it are ſubject to no variations or viciſſitudes of time and fortune, but righteous and warrantable, and without any ſtain of iniquity or reproach.

Zerubbabel had the universal acclamation of the audience, for the excellent things he delivered: and they all agreed with him, that truth was incorruptible, and the only blessing under the sun that was not liable to alteration and decay; so that the king, as an instance of his full satisfaction in this answer to the question, bade him take his choice out of what he had promised him, and he would freely grant it him.

For, says he, addressing himself to Zerubbabel, *You ſhall have the preference in my eſteem above all other men, in conſideration of the ſuperiority of your wiſdom and underſtanding above that of your companions. And from this time forward, you ſhall have the firſt place of honour next to my own perſon, and ſtand adopted into the royal family.*

Zerubbabel embraced this opportunity to remind the king of a former vow he had made; which was, that if he ever came to the crown, he would immediately apply himself to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the holy temple there, and order a restitution to be made of all the sacred vessels and utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from thence, and carried to Babylon.

Now, says he, *ſince your majeſty has done me the honour of reputing me a wiſe man, and giving me the preference on this occaſion, my humble requeſt is, that you will now diſcharge your vow, and fulfil your promiſe.*

The king, upon this challenge raised himself from his throne, embraced his adviser, and dispatched mandates to his governors and great officers, to conduct Zerubbabel, and those who go along with him, to their journey's end, and to assist him in the rebuilding of the temple.

He wrote letters also to the magistrates of Phenice and Syria, to

provide carriages for the transporting of the cedar to Jerusalem, that was cut down in Lebanon, and to afford them all possible assistance in their undertaking.

The king likewise gave charge to exempt all the Jews that should now return out of this captivity, from the burden of any public tax or duty, and to leave them at liberty in their persons, as well as in their estates, without either restraint or tribute.

Also he commanded the Edomites, Samaritans and the people of Celo-Syria, to restore all those lands to the Jews that had been formerly in their possession, and to contribute fifty talents over and above, toward the erecting of the temple; and assigned them out of his own bounty whatever should be found necessary, either in sacerdotal habits or otherwise, for the due regulation of every part and branch of that important work.

He moreover assigned them organs also to accompany the voices of the Levites, and ordered a certain proportion of land for the entertainment of the officers and keepers both of the city and the temple, by way of an annual pension; confirming every thing, in fine, that Cyrus had formerly resolved upon, the restoration of the Jews, and their holy vessels.

Zerubbabel, having thus obtained the summit of his wishes at the hand of king Darius; he no sooner had left his presence, than he addressed the throne of divine grace, to return God unfeigned thanks for the honour he had received from the king, in the reputation of his wisdom, beyond the rest of his competitors, which he acknowledged to be only the distinguishing effect of his goodness; concluding his thanksgiving with a prayer for the success of his undertaking; and then went his way to his countrymen at Babylon with the joyful news of their deliverance.

Upon these tidings, they joined immediately in an universal thanksgiving for the promise of this restoration to their native country. And after the solemnity was over, they devoted seven successive days to feasting, and indicated such tokens of general joy, that the day of their redeption and return, seemed as the first day of a new life to them.

The heads of the tribes made choice of those that were to go upon this expedition, providing horses, and other beasts of burden, and carriages for their wives and children, and taking those troops along with them which Darius had appointed for a convoy.

In this manner they passed their time cheerfully upon the way, with pipes and cymbals playing before them, and the whole multitude dancing and rejoicing after the music.

There was a select number chosen out from every tribe; but as mentioning them singly, would rather tire than instruct the reader, we shall only take notice of the distinct tribes.

There were of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, forty-two thousand, three hundred and sixty.

After these came four thousand and seventy Levites; and a promiscuous multitude

multitude of women and children, to the number of forty thousand seven hundred and forty-two.

Of the stock of the Levites there were an hundred and twenty eight singers; a hundred and ten porters, and of others that served and assisted in the sanctuary, three hundred and twenty-two.

There were also six hundred and fifty-two, that called themselves Israelites, but could not prove their extraction.

There were others that had taken wives, whose genealogy could not be made out, either from the Levites or sacerdotal records; and these were accounted unqualified for the holy function, to the number of five hundred and twenty-five.

The train of servants that attended them was reckoned at seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven. Single men and women, two hundred and thirty five. Camels, four hundred and thirty-five; and other beasts of carriage, five hundred and twenty-five.

The leader of this multitude was Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, of the tribe of Judah, and the race of David; and with him was Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and Mardochæus, and Serebæus, which two were chosen to the command, by the suffrage of the tribes, and contributed at their own charge, a hundred pound of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, towards the expence of this expedition.

This was the order and manner of the march of the Priests and Levites, and that part of the people that went along with them in their return from Babylon to Jerusalem, the rest following after by degrees, till in the end they all went back to their own habitations.

In the seventh month after their departure from Babylon, Jeshua the High-Priest, and Zerubbabel their prince, sent messengers throughout the land, to summon the people to a general meeting at Jerusalem, in consequence of which they gathered together with great cheerfulness.

Upon this meeting, there was erected an altar to sacrifice upon, according to the appointment of God by his servant Moses, and it was raised upon the same place where it stood before. This proceeding gave great offence to the neighbouring nations, who had a mortal aversion, both to the people, and to whatever they did. It fell out just upon the feast of tabernacles, according to the Mosaical institution; after that came the daily oblations, and the sacrifice of the sabbaths, and of the new moons, and of the holy feasts; all those that had made any vow came likewise to perform it, from the first day of the seventh month.

They entered them upon the building of the temple, and expended vast sums of money upon workmen and builders of all sorts; and upon provisions, for those that assisted in the carriage of materials. The Sidonians contributed liberally towards this work, bringing down cedar-trees in abundance from Lebanon, and framing them into boats, which they

they brought into the port of Joppa, as they had been ordered; first by Cyrus, and after him by Darius.

It was now the second month of the second year after the return of the Jews, when the foundations of the temple being already laid, they began on the first day of December with the superstructure, committing the care of the building to the whole family of the Levites, of twenty years of age and upward, and likewise to *Jeshua*, with his sons and brothers; and to *Kadmiel*, the brother of *Judah*, and the son of *Aminadab*, and to his sons, who were all so diligent and industrious in the discharge of their commissions, that the fabric went forward beyond expectation.

When they were advanced thus far, the priests came and officiated in their habits, with musical instruments; and the Levites, and the sons of Asaph, sung some of the hymns of David to the honour of God, according to the first institution. But the Priests and Levites, and the elders of their families, who had seen the glory and magnificence of the former house, observing how inferior this was when compared with the other, broke out into tears and lamentations.

The common people, however, that had never seen the former, and consequently could not be troubled at the disproportion, contented themselves with the present state of things, though the passion of the priests and elders was so great at the same time, that their very sighs and cries were almost as loud as the music.

The report of this noise of trumpets, with a confused clamour and mixture of joy and sorrow being brought to the Samaritans, they hastened in great multitudes to learn the cause of it; and finding that it was occasioned by the return of the Jews from the captivity at Babylon, and that they were now at work upon the rebuilding of their temple, they went immediately to Zerubbabel, and Jeshua with the chief of the tribes, and desired that they themselves might likewise be admitted to assist in the undertaking, upon terms in common with the rest. *For, said they, we worship the same God, value ourselves upon the glory of the same profession, and upon the love and practice of the same religion, from the very days of Shalmanezer, the king of Assyria, who transported us out of Media, into this land.*

The answer to the request was, with one voice, that they could not take them into a partnership in the building, because formerly Cyrus, and after him Darius, had assigned the building of it to their particular care; but that they should have liberty, if they thought fit, to worship there, without exception to any man, and that it should be open to all people indifferently, who were disposed to serve God in it.

The Cuthites (for so were the Samaritans called) were so offended at this refusal, that they stirred up the Syrians to apply themselves to the great men as they did at first, under Cyrus, and afterward under Artaxerxes, that a stop might be put to the progress of the building, by abating the

the diligence of those that were intrusted with the dispatch of the work.

There went up to Jerusalem at this time, *Sisinnes*, the governor of Syria and Phenice, and *Sathrabuzanes*, with some others, and demanded of some of the principal men, by what authority this temple was to be built, as it resembled a castle rather than a temple, and to what end the walls of the city were made so thick and strong, and the gates so fortified? Zerubbabel and Jeshua made answer, that they were the servants of the most high God, to whose honour this temple was built, and to his service it was dedicated by the greatest, the happiest, and the wisest prince that ever sat upon that throne, and that it had stood firm for many ages, till in the end, for the wickedness of their forefathers, the city, by God's permission, was taken, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and Chaldea, the temple pillaged, and laid in his ashes, and the people carried away captive into Babylon; but that when Cyrus came to the government of Persia and Babylon, he ordered, by his royal proclamation, the rebuilding of the temple, and restoring of all the donations and vessels that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar, which were delivered to Zerubbabel, and his treasurer, to be transported to Jerusalem, and deposited there again in the temple; that by the command of the same king, Sisinnes was sent to that city to attempt the speedy execution of the work; that upon receipt of the king's letters, he came in all haste, and immediately laid the foundation; and that from that time forward their enemies had been still endeavouring, by all the means their malice could suggest, to impede and obstruct the prosecution of their designs. As by an application to Darius, they might have been assured of the truth of what they told them; and as they did not think it expedient to interrupt their progress without the knowledge of the king, they therefore agreed among themselves to write to him immediately about this matter. The Jews were not a little solicitous and apprehensive, lest the king, upon this application, should countermand the orders he had given, till Aggeus, and Zacharias, two prophets among them at that time, bade them be of good cheer, and fear nothing from the Persians, for they were certainly informed of God's holy will and pleasure touching that affair. The people so absolutely depended upon this encouragement, that they laboured more incessantly without the intermission so much as of one single day.

When the Samaritans had laid an accusation against the Jews before Darius, objecting against them the fortifying of the city, and the erecting of a strong place that looked more like a citadel than a temple, setting forth that this was not at all for the king's service, and shewing also the epistle of Artaxerxes, by which he had forbidden and hindered it before, as a practice that was neither profitable nor safe for the public; when they had represented all this, and the king had received and considered of

these letters, he ordered the royal memorials to be consulted upon this subject; and upon the search, there was found at Echatana, a castle in Media, a certain book, wherein was written to this effect:

It was ordained by king Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, that the temple of God should be rebuilt at Jerusalem, sixty cubits in height, and as many in breadth, and the altar in it; that there should be in the walls three rows of polished marble, and one of wood, of the growth of the country, and the charge of it to be defrayed out of the king's treasury; that the holy vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, should be carried back to Jerusalem, and restored; that the superintendance of this work should be committed to Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phenice, and to his companions, with orders, not to appear at Jerusalem themselves, but to leave the building of the temple to the Jews, the servants of God, and to the chief of their tribes; but to supply them, however, out of the taxes upon the province, and to furnish them for their sacrifices, with bulls, rams, &c. and whatever else the priests should desire, who were to pray to God for the welfare and happiness of the king of Persia, and of his people, and that whosoever should presume to act contrary to this mandate, should be forthwith taken and hanged up, and his goods confiscated with the addition of a curse, over and above, that whoever should dare to oppose or forbid the progress of this work, God would strike him with a vengeance as a judgment upon him for his iniquity.

When Darius, upon a search into the transactions of Cyrus, had informed himself upon the matter of fact in question, he wrote back to Sisinnes and his colleagues, to this effect.

KING DARIUS TO SISINNES, THE MASTER OF HIS HORSE; AND TO SATHRABUZANES, AND THE OTHER MAGISTRATES WITH HIM, GREETING.

"I send you a copy of Cyrus's letter, transcribed out of his records, and it is my will and pleasure, that all things may be done, according to the direction of that appointment. Fare you well."

This letter gave them to understand how the king stood disposed; so that Sisinnes, and the rest agreed among themselves, to comply in all respects with the king's orders and command; and undertaking the care of the fabric, they assisted the Jews and their magistrates, and carried on the work so unanimously, that the building was erected according to the command of Cyrus and Darius, and finished within the compass of seven years; the prophet Aggeus and Zacharias, in the mean time prophesying.

In the sixth year of Darius, and three and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which the Jews called Adar, the Macedonians, the Priests and Levites, with the people of Israel, offered in sacrifice a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and twelve goats, as sin-offerings, for the twelve tribes, in acknowledgment

ledgment of the blessing of their deliverance from captivity, into their former state, and to his holy worship in a new temple.

The priests and levites had their porters at every gate, according to the law, the Jews having built galleries round about the temple.

The feast of unleavened bread was now drawing on, and in the first month, which the Macedonians called *Xanthicus*, and the Jews *Nisan*, the people flocked from all places to the city, where they celebrated that festival, together with their wives and children, after the practice of their forefathers, with all the solemnity usual on the occasion.

Upon the fourteenth day of the first month, they held the passover, and kept together rejoicing for seven days after; offering up sacrifices and thanksgiving to God, for restoring them to the possession and enjoyment of their native country, their ancient laws and religion, and for disposing the heart and inclination of the king, so favourably toward them.

They spared no cost in the celebration of this festival, and so replanted themselves in Jerusalem, where they erected an aristocracy; for the sovereign power was lodged in the high-priest, till the Asmonean family, upon a turn of affairs, entered upon the government, and erected it into a monarchy.

Before the captivity, and for the space of five hundred thirty-two years, six months, and ten days, from the time of Saul and David, they were governed by kings, as they were likewise before, though under the name of judges, and that form of government continued upwards of five hundred years, after the administration of Moses and Joshua.

This was the state of the Jews, at the time of the restoration under Cyrus and Darius.

But the Samaritans, who were an envious people, put them to much trouble; for they were powerful and wealthy, and claiming kindred with the Persians, valued themselves upon the credit of their original.

They murmured at the taxes that were laid upon them by way of contribution to the sacrifices, made an interest with the superintendent of the works, and, in short, either by themselves, or others, improved all opportunities of annoying the Jews.

This disorder prevailed so far, that the senate and the people of Jerusalem, drew up a complaint against the Samaritans, and sent Zerubbabel with four more of his colleagues upon an embassy with it to Darius.

When the king came to consider the crimes that were charged upon the Samaritans, he gave them a letter, addressed to the officers and lieutenants of that province, and the senate of Samaria, in words to this purport:

KING DARIUS TO TANGAR AND SAMBABA, THE MASTER OF THE HORSE AT SAMARIA, AND TO SADRACK, BOBELON, AND THE REST OF THEIR SUBJECTS THERE, SENDETH GREETING.

WHEREAS I am given to understand by Zerubbabel, Ananias, and

and Mardochæus, on the part of the Jews, that you ſtand accuſed of interrupting and diſcouraging the rebuilding of the temple, and of refuſing to bear part in the charge of the ſacrifices which by my order and command you ought to have done.

This is to require you, upon the ſight of this letter, forthwith to ſupply them out of my treaſury in Samaria, with whatſoever they ſhall want for the uſe of their ſacrifices and workmanſhip, to the end that they may offer up daily prayers and oblations, both for myſelf and for the people.

CHAP. VI.

ARTAXERXES SUCCEEDS DARIUS, AND FAVOURS THE CAUSE OF THE JEWS. NEHEMIAH SUPERINTENDS THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

ARTAXERXES, who succeeded his father Darius in the government, ſeems to have inherited his piety and virtue, as he encouraged and promoted the deſigns of the Jews towards the advancement of their religion. Joachim the ſon of Jehu, was at that time, high-prieſt, but the name of the high-prieſt of the Jews that lived at Babylon, was Esdras, a man of moſt exemplary piety and juſtice, nor had any one a fairer reputation among the people. He was ſo well verſed in the Moſaic law, that the king had a particular eſteem for him on that account.

Upon a reſolution taken to go to Jeruſalem, and to carry ſeveral of the Babylonian Jews along with him, he deſired ſuch a letter from the king as might recommend him to the governors and lieutenants of Syria, which he obtained to this purport:

ARTAXERXES THE KING OF KINGS, TO ESDRAS THE PRIEST, AND READER OF THE HOLY LAW OF GOD, GREETING.

WHEREAS it is decreed by me and my ſeven counſellors, that what Iſraelites ſoever within my dominions, with their prieſts and Levites ſhall think fit to bear you company to Jeruſalem; I have, out of my royal clemency, granted them free leave to go to Judea, to worſhip according to the laws of their country; and likewiſe to take along with them all the gold and ſilver, that your people throughout Babylon ſhall contribute toward that ſervice, for the buying of ſacrifices, to offer upon the altar to your God, and for making ſuch veſſels of gold and ſilver, as you and your brethren ſhall judge meet.

It is alſo my deſire, that what is thus given you, be dedicated to your God. And if you ſhould have occaſion for any thing elſe, uſe your own diſcretion, and ſupply yourſelf out of the public treaſure; to which end I have already written to the officers that have the cuſtody of it, in Syria and Phenice, expreſſly commanding them to furniſh whatſoever Eſdras the prieſt, and reader of the law of God ſhall deſire, without any delay.

And to the end that God may proſper both me and mine, I will have an hundred cores of wheat dedicated to God

God, according to the provision of the law.

And I do strictly charge and require of the magistrates, that they exact nothing from the priests, Levites, holy singers porters, or other officers of the temple; and that they lay no burdens upon them.

And for yourself, Esdras, I do hereby give you full authority, according to the wisdom you have received from above, to constitute judges that may see justice done to the people through Syria and Phenice, that understand the law, and are conscientious in their duty. And at the same time do you instruct the ignorant, to the end that all transgressions against the law of God, and of the king, may be punished according to their demerit. Farewell.

Upon the receipt of this letter, Esdras worshipped God, and gave thanks, ascribing to his gracious Providence all the benefits and favours they had received from the king; who served but as the instrument of communicating the divine blessings.

The Jews of that country were upon this occasion, summoned to a general meeting at Babylon, where the letter was read, and the copy of it transcribed, and sent away to be communicated to all the Jews of Media; but Esdras kept the original himself.

This instance of the king's piety towards God, and of the respect and kindness he had for Esdras, was an agreeable surprise to the people, insomuch that great numbers of them packed up their effects, and hastened away to Babylon, with a full purpose to return to Jerusalem; but there were then another sort of Israelites, who being accustomed to the place, and settled in their habitations chose rather to continue where they were. This seems to be the reason, that there were two tribes to be found in Asia and Europe, under the Roman emperor.

As for the other ten tribes, they were all planted beyond the Euphrates, and so prodigiously encreased that their number was scarcely to be computed.

The publication of this recommendatory testimonial, brought over multitudes to Esdras, not only priests and Levites, but temple porters, singers, and other officers and servants appertaining thereto.

Esdras appointed those, that were disposed to return out of captivity to rendezvous at the river Euphrates, where, after three days fast, and the solemnity of offering vows and prayers for a safe and prosperous journey, they began their march on the twelfth day of the first month, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and got to Jerusalem in the fifth month of the same year, where Esdras immediately delivered out the money he brought, to the priests that had the custody of the holy treasure; six hundred and fifty talents of silver, a hundred talents of silver vessels, twenty talents of vessels of gold, and twelve talents of fine brass, that was even more precious than gold itself.

These were the bounties of the king and his friends, and of the Israelites that continued in Babylon.

When Esdras had acquitted himself

of this trust, he offered unto God burnt-offerings, according to the direction of the law, twelve bulls for the whole people of Israel, seventy-two sheep and lambs, and twelve goats for a sin-offering

He delivered also the king's letter to the stewards and governors of Phenice and Celo-syria, who held the Israelites in great esteem, and readily supplied them with whatever they wanted, whose undertaking and council, in every respect, seemed to have been distinguished by peculiar tokens of the divine blessing.

Having composed and regulated their affairs, Esdras received information, that some of the priests and Levites had departed from the law, and their duty, by marrying into foreign families, and thereby confounding the sacerdotal race.

Appplication was therefore made to him, that he would assert the observation of the laws, lest God in his wrath, for the iniquity of a few, should avenge himself upon the whole body of people.

Esdras, upon this complaint, rent his cloaths, for very grief, tearing his hair off from his head and beard, and casting himself upon the ground in despair; for there were so many great men concerned in this abomination, that he thought it would be to no purpose to lay any injunction upon them, to part with their wives and children, so that he continued still desponding, with his face upon the earth.

All the people that retained any sense of goodness and reverence for the laws of God and their country, gathered together about him to condole with him, and to sympathize in his sorrows.

Esdras in the mean time, holding up his hands, said,

Thou, O God, knoweſt I am aſhamed to lift up my eyes to heaven on the behalf of theſe people, when I conſider, that after all the dreadful judgments upon their anceſtors for diſobedience, they do yet go on in the ſteps of their forefathers.

But, Lord, thy mercy is infinite; wherefore, have pity I beſeech thee upon this miſerable remnant of thy diſtreſſed ſervants. And as thou haſt been graciouſly pleaſed to bring them home again, perfect the work of thy redemption, in the pardon of their preſent tranſgreſſion.

It is confeſſed, that they deſerve to die for their iniquity; but their truſt is in thy goodneſs.

While the pious priest was prostrating himself at the throne of divine grace, in behalf of his nation and people, amidst a throng of men, women, and children, there came to him one Jechonias, a man of quality in Jerusalem, with a public confession and declaration of the sin they were all guilty of, that contrary to the law, they had married strange women, advising him to impose an oath upon all that had so done, to turn away all their wives and the children they had by them, and to enjoin a severe punishment on those that should refuse to submit to that decree.

Esdras approved the counsel, and took an oath of the chief priests and Levites, and of all Israel, to obey the proposed decree.

After

After this transaction, he went from the temple to the chamber of Joanan, the son of Eliasib, where he spent that whole day without eating any thing, through the great anxiety of his mind.

He then commanded by proclamation, all those people that were returned out of captivity, to meet at Jerusalem in two or three days; and in case of any failure, either through neglect or contempt, annexed, as a penalty, excommunication and confiscation of their goods to the holy treasury.

Within three days, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin assembled, on the twentieth day of the ninth month, which the Hebrews call Thebeth, and the Macedonians Apellæus. And when they had placed themselves in the upper part of the temple, the elders being there present, Esdras stood up and informed them, saying,

That whereas they were all guilty of a grievous sin, who in contempt of their country's laws, had entered into marriage with strangers, they had no way to recover God's favour, and to secure themselves from his vengeance, but by utterly casting off the women they had so taken.

After this declaration of Esdras, they unanimously signified their approbation of his counsel, and readiness to comply with it; but the number being very great, the season extremely cold, and the business of great importance, they looked upon it as a thing that required time and consideration to accomplish: so that upon this reflection, it was proposed that a commission of enquiry might be issued out to a select number of eminent men and elders, who were free from the general charge.

This motion was unanimously received and approved, and upon the first day of the tenth month, they entered upon the inquisition, which continued till the first day of the month following. Upon this scrutiny, they found great numbers of the relations of Jeshua, the high-priest, as well as of other priests and Levites, and the rest of the Israelites, who being in the common transgression, joined immediately in the abandoning their wives and children, preferring the solemn injunction of obedience to the laws of God, to all the ties of paternal affection.

After this solemnity, they offered up rams according to custom, for peace-offerings. Thus did Esdras reform a gross abuse, and introduce a pious practice, that prevailed ever after.

In the seventh month was the feast of tabernacles, and almost the whole multitude of the Israelites were now met together upon the occasion, in that part of the temple which looks towards the east, where Esdras at their request read the law of God unto them as he stood in the middle of the crowd.

This lecture continued from morning to mid-day, to the great edification of all the hearers; for they were thereby not only given to understand the rules and measures of truth and righteousness, present and future; but their thoughts were also carried back to reflections upon things past, by a recital of the calamities that their forefathers

forefathers had endured, only for the violation of those laws, in the observance whereof they might have been secure and happy.

This consideration drew tears from their eyes, and Esdras observing the pious effect it had upon their minds, bade them go home, and set their hearts at rest, for it was a kind of prophanation of the holy solemnity, to weep upon a festival; wherefore he advised them to be rather free and merry, and to eat, drink, and rejoice, in honour of the day, exhorting them not to make their repentance a mortification, any further than to secure them for the future, from a relapse into the same errors.

The people were willing therefore to follow his counsel, and celebrated the feast as they ought to do; so that after eight days spent in mirth and feasting, they returned every man to his own habitation, but not without thankful acknowledgments to Esdras, for the reformation he had wrought in the government.

By this meritorious service, he gained infinitely upon the hearts and affections of the people, so that he lived with honour, and died at Jerusalem in an advanced age, where he had also a most magnificent burial.

Jehoiakim, the high-priest, died also about the same time, and Eliasim his son succeeded him.

There was among the Jewish captives, a certain person whose name was Nehemiah, the butler, or cup-bearer to Artaxerxes. As he was walking one day before Susa, the capital of Persia, he happened to hear some travellers that had come a long journey together into the city, talking Hebrew one to another.

Upon which occasion he asked them, from what quarter they came? As they answered from Judea, he proceeded to divers other questions concerning the Jews, and the state of their city.

They informed him, that affairs were in a bad situation; that their walls were all pulled down, and their country laid open to the outrages and incursions of their malicious neighbours; themselves carried away into captivity, and the highways strewed every where with dead bodies.

Nehemiah could not forbear weeping at this deplorable state of his countrymen and kindred: and with his eyes towards heaven, he cried out to Almighty God.

Lord, how long Lord, wilt thou suffer thy people to be trampled upon, and exposed as a prey to mankind!

While Nehemiah was at the gate, and in the middle of his lamentations, one of the attendants brought him word, that the king was ready to go to supper; so that he hastened away in confusion and disorder to his duty.

The king, after supper, being somewhat more cheerful than before, and observing a heaviness of countenance in Nehemiah, enquired the cause?

Alas, sir, says Nehemiah, (after a short ejaculatory prayer, that God would give energy and persuasion to his words;) how is it possible for me to be otherwise, than overwhelmed with grief and heaviness of heart, when the place of my nativity is laid waste and destroyed, Jerusalem made an heap of rubbish, the gates burnt, the

the ſepulchres and monuments of my anceſtors broken up, and the aſhes of the dead ſacrilegiouſly prophaned?

Now, ſir, I have but one favour to requeſt of you, which is, that I may have your royal leave to take a journey thither, to help forward the rebuilding of it.

The king granted his petition, and promised him letters recommendatory to the governors, through whose provinces he was to pass, with orders to treat him with all manner of reſpect, and to supply him with whatever he wanted toward the work he was about. Wherefore the king encouraged him to set his heart at ease, and go on cheerfully in his service.

Upon this assurance Nehemiah revived, and blessed God and the king upon finding so gracious a disposition in his favour.

On the day following the king sent for Nehemiah, and gave him letters of credit to Sadeus, governor of Syria, Phenice, and Samaria, with orders and instructions to receive and assist him, as he had promised.

He went first to Babylon, and from thence, with as many of his friends and companions as voluntarily offered themselves to bear him company, he proceeded to Jerusalem, where he arrived in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. And having first given his friends the sight of his credentials, he delivered them to Sadeus and his colleagues, according to the address.

After this, he summoned a general meeting of the people up to Jerusalem, and harangued them in the temple, after the following manner:

You cannot, but ſee and underſtand ye men of Judea, that we are at this day under the power and Providence of the ſame Almighty and merciful God, that did ſo many great things for our forefathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, out of a gracious regard to their piety and virtue; and it is by the favour of that God, that I have now obtained leave from the king to enter upon the rebuilding of your walls, and the completing of the work of the temple, that is yet unfiniſhed.

But be aſſured, that the neighbouring nations are enemies to your undertaking, and will do all that is in their power to obſtruct your deſign, when they once ſee you heartily intent upon the work. I therefore recommend it to you in the firſt place, to take courage, and caſt yourſelves upon God, who will moſt certainly defeat all the practices of your enemies. And ſecondly, that you apply to your buſineſs day and night, without intermiſſion, this being the proper ſeaſon for it.

Upon this Exhortation, *Nehemiah* immediately ordered the Magistrates to survey the ground, and take measure of the walls. And according to that computation, to make an equal distribution of the work among the people, at so much a town, or village, as it should fall out in proportion; promising at the same time the assistance of himself, and of all that belonged to him, to join in the service; and with these words he dismissed the assembly.

The authority of Nehemiah made such an impression upon the Jews that they

they immediately applied themselves to their business.*

The rumour of this enterprize was no sooner brought to the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Samaritans, and Celo-Syrians, than they were enflamed with envy and resentment; and left nothing undone to obstruct the work, either by force or fraud.

They layed in wait for the jews up and down in ambushes, and destroyed a great many of them by surprize. They kept ruffians in pay, to attempt the person of Nehemiah himself, alarming the people with pretended stories of invasion, that the multitude, terrified thereat, were ready to desist from the undertaking. But Nehemiah firmly persisted, and under the security of a slender guard, wrought on without weariness or apprehension of danger.

It was not for the sake of his own safety, or from the fear of death, that he made this provision; but he was well assured, that if he should be cut off, his countrymen would never finish the building. So he gave orders for the future, that all the carpenters, masons, and other labourers, should work with their swords by their sides, and their bucklers, within a convenient distance, in order to be ready upon occasion.

He appointed trumpeters also to be posted within five hundred paces one of another, and upon any discovery of an enemy, to give the alarm, that the people might have time to stand to their arms, without any danger of a surprize.

He went every night the round of the city, and his body was so inured to hard work, hard fare, and watching, that it was proof against all those difficulties, so that he never eat or slept more than was necessary to support nature. This was his course of life for two years and three months, during which he worked at the walls, which were finished in the eight and twentieth year, and the ninth month of the reign of Artaxerxes.

Upon the perfecting of the fortifications, Nehemiah, and the people offered up their sacrifice, and continued together, for eight days, feasting and rejoicing, which was very unwelcome news to the Syrians, when they came to understand it.

Nehemiah reflecting, that the city, at that time was thin of inhabitants, he persuaded all the priests and levites thereabouts to take up their habitations in the city, and he would be at the charge of providing them houses.

He ordered likewise the people in the country, that followed husbandry, to carry their tents into the city for the maintenance of the priests and levites, that they might not be diverted by any worldly cares from attending the duty of their office.

To this plan they readily agreed on all sides, by which means the city was, by degrees, better peopled.

After this, and many other glorious actions, worthy of eternal honour,

* This was the first time that the people were ever called Jews, or their country Judea, and it was so called from the tribe of Judea, that were formerly possessed of that quarter.

Nehemiah departed this life; and it may with justice be recorded of him, that he was a man of virtue and strict honour, of eminent bounty and extensive charity.

CHAP. VII.

ARTAXERXES IS SUCCEEDED BY HIS SON OF THE SAME NAME. STORY OF ESTHER, HAMAN, AND MORDECAI.

ON the demise of the late King of Media and Persia, the Government devolved on his son Cyrus, otherwise Artaxerxes, in whose reign over the Persians, the whole nation of the Jews, with their wives and children, were in great danger of being utterly destroyed.

When Artaxerxes had ascended the throne, and settled the governors of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces between India and Ethiopia, he made a most magnificent and sumptuous feast at Susa, in the third year of his reign, where he treated his friends and officers, as became the dignity of so great a prince; and the solemnity lasted a hundred and fourscore days. There were several other nations also, and their ambassadors, that assisted at the ceremony of the entertainment seven whole days successively; it was ordered after this manner.

There was a tent erected upon gold and silver pillars, covered with fine linen and purple, and large enough to receive some thousands of people. The wine was served up in cups of gold and precious stones, that were made both for curiosity and delight. There were orders given to the waiters, after the Persian manner, that no man should be forced to drink any more than he had a mind to, and proclamation made all over his dominions, that they should set some certain number of days apart for the celebration of a festival for the prosperity and safety of the kingdom. Queen Vashti had her apartment also in the palace for the entertainment of the women.

As she was a woman of great beauty, the king was desirous of shewing her to his guests, and sent for her to come into his presence, but as the laws of Persia allowed not wives to be seen by any men except their domestics, she refused to go to the king, and upon several orders brought her by the eunuchs to the same purpose, she persisted still in the denial.

The king was so incensed at her obstinacy, that after the festival was over, he called for the seven commissioners that were expressly appointed for the interpretation of the Persian laws to advise with, what was to be done in this case of his wife's contumacy and disobedience; complaining that it was not only once, but over and over that she refused to come to him; and therefore desired to know what the law directed in that case. One of them whose name was Muchæus, gave his opinion, *that it was not only an affront to himself in the matter of fact, but a precedent of dangerous consequence to his subjects in general, whose wives would be apt to dispise their husbands too, and by that contempt provoke them to lewd courses, if this exemplary*

contumacy

contumacy of the queen's against so mighty a king ſhould paſs unpunished; concluding that it was a heinous offence, ſo it ought to be treated with severity; and that nothing leſs would ſatisfy, than the baniſhing of Vaſhti from the king's court and presence for ever. And this to be done by proclamation, and another taken in her place.

The king was so divided between the love he had for the queen, and the respect he had for the law, the one being against their parting, and the other against their living together, that he was distracted by this difficulty of acting against his inclination.

While he was in this anxiety of mind, his friends plied him with good offices and counsel, to divert him from the weakness of making himself miserable for the unprofitable love of one woman, when he might have the greatest beauties upon the face of the earth, at his devotion, if he thought fit to command them; so that he had no more to do, but to get sight of her, and take her for his wife, out of the whole sex. Variety, and a new love, would quickly wear out the fondness of a former, and a little custom and conversation would bring him to himself again.

The king, upon second thought, was well pleased with the advice, and sent commissioners immediately over all his dominions, to take a view of the most celebrated beauties they could find, and bring them to him.

They were punctual and diligent in the execution of their orders; and, among others, they found a maid in Babylon, whose name was Esther.

Her father and mother were both dead, and she was brought up under the care of her uncle Mordecai, who was one of the tribe Benjamin, and a capital man among the jews.

This virgin was so much superior to all the rest, for the graces of her person, that she was the admiration of every one who saw her.

She was committed to the care of one of the eunuchs, where she was treated with all possible delicacy and respect; that is, according to the custom of eastern nations, adorned with the richest of essences and perfumes, and all other ornamental curiosities that were made use of by great ladies, to render them more agreeable and charming.

In this manner was Esther treated for the space of six months, in company with four hundred virgins; after which time, being thus prepared for the king's bed, he had every day one of them brought him, whom he received into his arms, and then sent back again to the care of the same eunuch.

But when it came to Esther's turn, he was so transported with her company and conversation that he took her to himself for his lawful wife, and celebrated the nuptials in the seventh year of his reign, and the twelfth month, which was called Adar, sending his messengers throughout his dominions to proclaim the solemnity of a marriage-festival.

As for the Medes and Persians, and the great men of other nations, the king himself entertained them at the wedding feast, for the space of one whole

whole month, and upon his wife's entering into the palace, he placed the crown upon her head, and so lived with her without enquiring concerning her country or her extraction.

Her Uncle removed from Babylon to Susa, where he frequently waited at the king's gate, and still inquisitive after Esther's welfare, who was equally dear to him, as his own child.

The king at this time passed an order, that none of his domestics should presume, while he was sitting upon his royal throne, to come to him, unless they were called, or sent for, upon pain of losing their heads; and there were officers, with their axes always at hand, to do the execution.

The king in the mean time had a golden sceptre in his hand, and whensoever he had a mind to save any of those that came uncalled, he held that sceptre forth, and upon their touching it, they were exempted from the penalty.

There broke out about this time, a conspiracy that was formed between Bigthana and Terish, two of the chamberlains, or eunuchs, against the person of the king.

Barnabazus, a servant of one of them, and a jew by extraction, discovered this treachery to Mordecai, the king's uncle; and he, by the hands of Esther, to the king himself, who relied so much on his affection and loyalty, that he put the criminals to the question; and upon conviction, they were both delivered up to justice.

The king gave Mordecai no other reward for his discovery, than by appointing the service and deliverance to be registered upon the record, and allowing him admittance into the palace, with the same freedom and privilege as one of his domestics.

Haman, the son of *Hammedatha*, an Amalekite, being now advanced by the king, and coming frequently to court, the Persians, as well as strangers, paid him the greatest reverence; and it was the king's pleasure and command that it should be so, Mordecai was the only person that did not bow to him, being a ceremony contrary to the practice of his country.

Haman, taking notice of this singularity, asked him, what countryman he was? and finding him to be a Jew, broke out into a violent exclamation, at the insolence of such a miscreant, that when all the natives, and the free-born Persians, with the greatest willingness, did him that honour; this Jew, who was no better than a slave, should presume to affront him.

In this rage he took a resolution, to be revenged upon Mordecai; and the hatred he had for the Jews was so mortal, that it was not sufficient, he thought, to wreak his vengeance upon the person of Mordecai alone, without destroying the whole race at once; calling to mind, at the same time that the Amalekites his countrymen, had been formerly driven out of their land, and utterly exterminated by that people.

In the heat of his indignation, he hastened to the king, and accosted him with a complaint, against the

Jews, as a vile generation of people in every respect, unsociable in their disposition, singular in their manners, given up to superstitious laws and ceremonies, scattered up and down in all quarters of his dominions, and men that shewed themselves in their practices and conversation, the common enemies of mankind.

Now, says Haman, if you would lay the greatest obligation of loyalty upon your subjects, you must order this sort of men to be rooted out from among your people, without sparing so much as one captive, or one servant.

And, for our security, that you shall not suffer by it in your revenue, I will be answerable for forty thousand talents of silver, to be paid into your treasury, out of my own estate; for I shall not value any diminution of my particular fortune, provided that your dominions may be cleared of this lewd people.

The king told Haman, upon this proposal, that he would leave the jews to be dealt with according to his discretion, and remit the money over and above.

Haman, immediately upon this published an edict in the king's name, and sent it abroad thro' all his dominions, to this effect.

THE GREAT KING ARTAXERXES, TO THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN GOVERNORS OF THE PROVINCES, BETWEEN INDIA AND ETHIOPIA, GREETING.

WHEREAS it hath pleased God to give me the command of many nations, and a dominion over the rest of the world, as large as I can desire. Being resolved to do nothing that may be either tyrannical or grievous towards my people, and to bear a gentle and an easy rule over them, with an eye to the preserving of their peace and liberties, in the first place, and the settling them in a state of tranquillity and happiness, not to be shaken.

All this I have taken in mature consideration; and being given to understand, by my trusty and well-beloved friend and counsellor, Haman, a person of approved fidelity, prudence and justice, and whom I esteem above all others; that there is a mixture of an inhuman kind of people among my subjects, who take upon them to govern by their own laws, and to prescribe ways to themselves in contempt of public order and government; men depraved, both in their customs and manners; and enemies, not only to monarchy, but to methods of our royal administration.

This is therefore to will and require you, that upon notice given unto you by Haman, (who is to me as a father) of the persons intended by this proclamation, you put all the said persons, men, women, and children, to the sword, without any favour or regard, to person or sex, in a strict pursuance of my decree.

And it is farther commanded, that you put this in execution upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of this present year; to compleat in one day the destruction of all mine and your enemies, in order to a future peace and security, during the remainder of our lives.

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This edict was quickly spread from town to town, throughout the whole empire, and the people prepared themselves accordingly, to execute the bloody design upon the Jews at the day appointed, and there was the same disposition to mischief at Susa, the king's place of residence, as of all other parts.

The king and Haman all this while passed their time in drinking, feasting and all sorts of luxury; but the people of the town were under very dismal apprehensions at the thought of the barbarous massacre.

As soon as Mordecai came to be informed of the tenor and intent of this proclamation, he rent his garments, put on sackcloth, and went up and down the town with ashes on his head, exclaiming against the horrid injustice of so bloody a design upon the Jews.

In this afflicted condition, he wandered about till he came at last to stop before the gate of the king's palace, for there was no entrance allowed to any man in that habit. The resentment and behaviour of the Jews was the same in all other places, as at court, upon the issuing of the king's orders. That is, they were every where overwhelmed with lamentations and despair.

When it came to the queen's ear, that Mordecai was before the gate of the palace in that forlorn habit, she was troubled at the report, and sent an attendant out to him to change his garment; but his answer was, that he could not do it, till the cause was first removed, for which he assumed it.

It happened that *Hatach*, one of the king's eunuchs, was at that time in the queen's presence; she therefore called him to her, and sent him out to learn the cause of Mordecai's assuming that dress, and refusing to quit it at her request.

The eunuch put these questions to Mordecai, who related to him the whole story at length, how the king, at the instigation of Haman, had issued out his royal proclamation throughout all his dominions, for the extirpating of the Jews and also how vast a sum of money Haman had offered by way of composition, for to do it.

Mordecai gave him a true copy of the edict, from the original, to be delivered to the queen; desiring farther, that she would make an humble application to the king upon this matter, and intercede with him on their behalf; representing to her the necessity of an immediate interposition, as the lives of the whole nation were in question; and as Haman, who was the king's right hand, would never leave calumniating the Jews, and exasperating the king against them, till he had gained his point.

Upon the eunuch's giving the queen this account of the matter, she sent Mordecai word, *That it was a capital crime to break in upon the king when he was upon the throne of ſtate, without being called to attend him, unleſs he ſhould vouchſafe to hold forth his golden ſcepter in token of his pardon.*

When he heard this, he pressed the queen again, by the same messenger, telling her, that it was not her

her own personal safety that was now in question, but the security of the whole race; advising her likewise, by no means, to neglect the present opportunity of doing so necessary and charitable an office, assuring her, that God himself would relieve them, even if she should neglect to do it. And that she and her family might live to be at the mercy of those whom she now despised.

Esther, by the same messenger desired her uncle to call an assembly of the Jews at Susa, and hold a three days fast, for the safety of the queen; informing him, that she and her servants would do the like; and that after this preparation, she was resolved to go to the king, in despite of all prohibition and danger; as she must die, she would frankly resign her life in the service of her country.

Mordecai, in compliance with the queen's order, appointed a public fast, and humbled himself in supplications to Almighty God, to defeat the malice of their enemies; and, according to his wonted goodness, extend his mercy to penitent offenders, and finally to deliver them from the destruction denounced against them: representing, *That it was not for any fault of their own that they were exposed to this extremity, but through the pride of Haman's heart, who thought it an indignity offered to himself in being denied that adoration to him, which was due to God alone.* And that a whole nation was not to be rooted out, because they would not be corrupted into a violation and contempt of the divine laws.

The devotion of the whole multitude was to the same effect: desiring God to vouchsafe them his protection, and avert that dreadful judgment from the Israelites, that now hung over their heads. The queen worshipped likewise with her face prostrate on the ground, after the manner of her country, in a mourning weed, and imposing upon herself a three days abstinence from either meat or drink, or any other sensual gratification, beseeching God to move the king's heart, in favour of her mediation for a miserable and persecuted people, by rendering both her words and her person more acceptable than ever, upon this fatal extremity, to the confusion of their enemies, and of all their malicious designs upon her poor distressed countrymen.

After three days spent in fervent and pious importunity for mercy and compassion from the throne of divine grace, the queen put on her royal apparel; and with her two handmaids, bearing up her train, advanced towards the king; her face being covered with such a blush as expressed both grace and majesty, but at the same time some doubtful apprehension; for upon the sight of the king mounted on his throne, and the effulgence of his robes, that were embroidered with gold, pearl, and precious stones, she suddenly was struck with a trembling. And upon fancying (which affected her more than all his splendor) that the king looked

looked upon her, as if he was discomposed, and out of humour, she fell into the arms of one of her maids in a swoon *. This accident, by the intervention of God's holy will and providence, alarmed the king, who fearing she might not recover, hastily descended from his throne, took her into his arms, and, with the kindest words, gave her this comfort, that no advantage should be made of the law to her prejudice, though she came without calling; for that was a decree that extended only to the subjects, wherein she was not at all concerned, whom he looked upon as his companion and partner in the empire.

With these words he put his golden sceptre into her hands, and laying it gently upon her neck, secured her from any farther fear or danger.

This instance of tenderness both of love and assurance, revived the affrighted queen, who thus addressed the mighty Artaxerxes.

Sir, it is impossible for me to express the manner of this sudden seizure; but I had no sooner the awful appearance of your sacred person and majesty in my view, than my heart failed me.

She accompanied these words with so languishing an accent, and so weak a voice, that the lively representation of what she felt, made the king more solicitous to comfort her, which he did in terms so explicit, that he bid her ask him any thing, to the one half of his kingdom, and that it should be given her.

Esther replied, that her only request was this, that he would be pleased to take part of an entertainment with her that day which she had provided for him, and permit Haman to come with him.

Her suit was granted; they both came; and when the king was in his cups, and in good humour, he called upon his wife as before, to ask what she pleased within that compass, and it should be granted her.

The queen begged the king's favour for the same honour again the day following at another entertainment, and to bring Haman along with him once again; and informed him, she would then take the freedom to present her petition.

The king was well pleased with the proposition; and Haman overjoyed to find himself the only man that was singled out upon so honourable occasion, to bear the king company at a royal banquet.

In his return home, he happened to see Mordecai the Jew in the king's palace; and taking notice, that he paid him no sort of reverence, he went with his wife *Zeresh*, with a company of his friends about him, and there told them the whole story, how much he was in the good graces of the king and the queen; how he had supped with him that

* This circumstance of the queen's swooning is not mentioned in any of the canonical chapters of the book of Esther, but in the fifteenth of the Apocryphal, and in the sixteenth, the king is called Artaxerxes, but in the book of Esther, he is called Ahasuerus, owing to the different idioms of the languages.

day, upon a particular invitation, and was to be with them to-morrow again upon the same account.

But, says he, *the insolent stiffness of the Jew Mordecai gives me no small uneasiness.*

Upon which his wife gave him this counsel. Order a gallows of fifty cubits high to be immediately set up, and obtain the king's permission to-morrow morning, to hang up Mordecai upon it.

Haman took his wife's counsel, and commanded his people to erect such a gallows in his own palace, which he designed for the execution of the Jews; and the gibbet was set up accordingly. But God, who foresees and orders all events disappointed wicked Haman in all his impious hopes and purposes; for that very night, the king finding he could not sleep, and accounting it time lost to lie idle and waking, chose rather to employ his thoughts upon some subject that might turn to the advantage of his government, and therefore commanded his secretary to bring him his memorials and papers of state, as well modern as ancient, and to read the accounts of them.

The king found upon the reading of them, the name of a person that had great honours and possessions given him, as a reward for a glorious and a remarkable action: and so likewise of another, that made his fortune by the bounties of his prince for his fidelity; coming at last to the particular story of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs, Bigthama and Teresh against his own person, and of the discovery of this treason by Mordecai; the secretary reads it over, and was passing forward to the next; but the king bade him hold, and enquired if that person had any reward given him for his service. The secretary replied, that there was no reward mentioned in the relation, and then the king bade him stop there, and enquire of the attendants what time of night it was; answer being brought that it was break of day, he was commanded to see if there were any of his friends at the palace gate, and bring him word, when he came to look he found Haman, who was earlier up than ordinary, for fear of being too late with his petition to the king against the life of Mordecai. Word being brought to the king that Haman was at the gate, he ordered him to be called in; and upon his entrance into the chamber, spoke to him after this manner: *I know that you are the kindest friend to me in the world; and therefore I would ask your counsel, what mark of honour you would advise me to bestow upon the person that I have the greatest obligation to imaginable; and I will do it with a respect to my own royal dignity, as well as for my affection to my subjects.*

Haman made no doubt of finding his own interest in his resolving this question, and presuming that this character could not be intended to any other than himself: he therefore gave it as his opinion, that the king should cloath the man whom he desired to honour, with his own royal apparel, mount him upon his own horse, make him a present of a golden chain, and then cause some

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one or other of his particular confidents and friends to march before him, as a herald, and make proclamation all over the city: *Thus ſhall it be done to the man whom the king vouchſafes to honour.*

Now Haman suggested this counsel to the king, in confidence that he would adjudge this honour to himself, and no other; and the king was highly pleased with the motion; *Whereupon go,* says he, *and take the horſe, the apparel, and the chain, and when you have found out Mordecai the Jew, equip him in theſe accoutrements; and when he is mounted, do you march before him in quality of an officer, to make the proclamation; for you, being my particular friend, are the fitteſt man both to adviſe with, and to execute your own counſel. I will do this honour to Mordecai, becauſe I am indebted to him for my life.*

This order being intirely unexpected, struck Haman with amazement and surprize: but notwithstanding his confusion, he durst do no other than execute it; and was obliged to go with the horse, habit, and the gold chain to Mordecai, therefore finding him at the palace-gate in his rags of humiliation, he bade him strip himself of his sackcloth, and put on that purple. Now the Jew, knowing nothing of the matter, took the whole ceremony for a mock, and treated Haman in plain terms, as a mean insolent wretch, to insult the miserable: but upon a farther reasoning of the matter, Haman convinced him at last, that the king had ordered this honour to be done him in recompence of the service he had rendered him, in saving his life from the conspiracy of the two eunuchs: and being thus convinced, he put on the royal purple, and the golden chain, mounted the king's horse, and took the tour of the city; Haman making proclamation before him, Thus shall it be done unto him that the king honours.

Mordecai, after this, went to the king, and Haman departed to his own house, where he related to his sorrowful wife and friends, the lamentable account of what had passed. Upon hearing these circumstances, they found there was no revenging themselves upon Mordecai, for God had taken him into his protection.

As they were in the middle of this discourse, the king's eunuchs came from Esther to call Haman to supper. One of them, whose name was *Sabuchadas,* taking notice of a gibbet that was erected in the court, asked one of the servants the meaning of it, and understanding it was prepared for Mordecai, the queen's uncle, for whose execution Haman had designed to intercede with the king; he passed on to his duty. As they were at supper, and all parties pleased with the entertainment, the king put the former day's proposal again to the queen, with an assurance, that let her ask what she pleased, it should not be denied her.

Thus encouraged, she represented in the most melting strain, the unhappy fate to which the Jewish nation was destined, and gave the king to understand, that this was the subject she desired

desired to lay before him; observing, *That she would by no means interrupt his affairs of state; or if it had been so ordered that her countrymen might have only been sold for slaves, this calamity might have been tolerable: so that she had only this suit to move, that he would be pleased to put a stop to the imminent destruction that was otherwise to be executed upon the whole race.*

The king called out presently to know who it was that had any such design on foot, The queen made answer, *That Haman was the author of that advice, and that he did it out of an impulse of pure malice to that people.* This discourse put the king out of humour, and he withdrew from the entertainment into the garden.

Haman by this time found the storm approaching, and began to apply himself to the queen, with acknowledgments of his mistakes, and desire of pardon; and threw himself upon the bed by her in a way of humiliation and respect. The king returning at the same time, and seeing Haman in that posture upon the bed, was more incensed by that circumstance, than by all the rest, calling him the basest and wickedest of men, for so insolent an attempt upon the honour of his wife. These words were accompanied with such a fierceness of tone and action, that Haman was struck dumb at the very utterance.

Upon this the eunuch before mentioned told the king of a gibbet of fifty cubiss in height, that Haman had set up for Mordecai in his own court, as he understood by one of his servants, when he was there to give him an invitation to supper. The king immediately took up a resolution of inflicting the same punishment therefore upon Haman, that he had prepared for Mordecai, and ordered him immediately to be hanged upon the same gibbet.*

This was the end of Haman, the wicked abuser of the king's goodness and bounty. His body was delivered up to justice, and his estate given to the queen. The queen had by this time made known to the King that Mordecai was her kinsman; so that he sent for him, and delivered him the same ring that Haman had been intrusted with before. The possessions of Haman, that the king had granted to the queen, she bestowed upon Mordecai, and then made it her request to his majesty, that he would deliver the Jews out of that apprehension for their lives, under which they yet laboured, reminding him of the letters that Haman the son of Hammedatha, had dispersed in his name throughout the empire, making declaration that her own life depended upon the safety of her country and her relations.

The king assured her on his royal word, that nothing should be done to the jews without her knowledge and approbation; and he gave her liberty to write what she thought fit, concerning the Jews, in his name, de-

* I cannot pass over this wonderful concurrence of providence, without a remark upon the almighty power and the admirable justice and wisdom of God, not only in bringing Haman to this deserved punishment, but in trapping him in the very snare he had laid for another, and turning a malicious device upon the head of the contriver.

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claring that the letters should be signed, sealed, and dispersed by his order throughout all his dominions; adding, that when they should once be confirmed by the royal signature, their authority would pass without dispute or contradiction; wherefore the king appointed his scribes and secretaries to attend him, commanding them to write letters on the behalf of the jews to the magistrates of all the nations that lie between India and Ethiopia, under the command of a hundred and twenty-seven governors.

The following letter contains the substance of the edicts:

ARTAXERXES, THE GREAT KING TO OUR TRUSTY MAGISTRATES, GREETING.

WHEREAS it is a common practice in the world for men that are advanced rather upon favour than merit, not only to insult their inferiors, but to requite their benefactors with ingratitude, as much as in them lies, to extinguish all sense of gratitude or good nature in human society, Perverting also, out of pride and weakness of mind, the power and credit, that are reposed in them, to the dishonour of their patrons, from whom they received it; and under such an appearance too, as if they thought God himself could not see through the disguise.

Besides that, it is no new thing, for state minions to gratify their own private passion, to the prejudice of their masters, by misrepresenting the innocent, and by these ill offices with the prince, to put honest men in danger of their lives.

I speak not this upon meer report, but upon the certainty of what I have seen with my own eyes, upon proof, not rumour. Wherefore, let no regard be paid for the future to bare accusations, or, in truth slanders rather; but let the fact be strictly examined, and the person accused, either acquitted or punished, as he shall be found innocent or guilty.

It is well known that Haman, was by extraction an Amalekite, and not a Persian, and with what tenderness of affection and hospitality I received him; what honours I conferred upon him, even to the degree of calling and esteeming him as my father, commanding all my subjects to pay him a reverence, next in order to what they ought to my own person.

Now this man was so intozicated with vanity and arrogance, that passing all the measures of sobriety and duty, he improved the power I gave him, so far as in him lay, toward the supplanting of me in my kingdom, and the destroying of that person by treacherous practices, to whom I stand indebted for my life and government. I speak of Mordecai, my benefactor and preserver; and of my dearest wife the queen likewise, whom I tender as the one half of my own soul, and my partner in the empire. His plot being in the first place perfidiously to attempt the lives of my most loyal friends and then to seize upon my crown and government.

Now, forasmuch as the lewd designs of this wicked man are unquestionably notorious,

notorious, and particularly his bloody and barbarous contrivance for the total extirpation of the Jews: this is to notify and declare, that I find these people so far from being troublesome or seditious, as he represented them, that, on the contrary, I highly approve of their institutions, ways and manners, as a people worshipping the same God, to whose bounty and Protection our family stands indebted both for the possession and preservation of our empire.

It is therefore our royal pleasure, by these presents, not only to discharge the same people of all the pains and penalties to which they were made liable by our letters communicated to you by the hand of Haman, but likewise that you treat them with all manner of gentleness and respect; having caused the author of this malicious persecution, to be put to death, upon a gibbet, and his family slain by the sword, before the gates of Susa, as a most necessary sacrifice to divine justice.

This is also farther to will and require you, that you forthwith dispatch copies of these our letters throughout all our dominions, permitting the Jews to live in a peacable enjoyment of their own laws, and that you give them your aid and assistance toward vindicating of themselves upon those that spitefully and injuriously oppressed them in their adversity.

And whereas the precise time appointed for the utter extirmination and destruction of these people was to have been upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, it is our pleasure, that you pitch upon the same month and day for the work of their deliverance, as a circumstance the most agreeable to the methods of God's power and justice, not doubting but that his way of proceeding will be much to the satisfaction of all our friends, and the example of it stand upon record to posterity, for a monumental caution to all traitors for the time to come.

And be it also known to all our cities, towns and people herein concerned, that what person soever shall presume, either by disobedience, and neglect, to act any ways contrary to the tenor of this our royal command, he shall be liable to military execution by fire and sword, whereof all our subjects are to take warning, and the Jews to be in readiness at the time assigned, to do themselves right upon their enemies.

Messengers were immediately dispatched with these letters to all quarters. Mordecai in the mean time, coming forth out of the palace, dressed in royal robes, a crown and golden chain, the Jews soon interpreted his appearance into a common blessing to them all; and the publication of the king's letter throughout all the towns and cities of his dominions, diffused such a universal joy among them, that a grateful complacency appeared in every countenance; nay, and this grace of the king had so powerful an influencc and effect, even upon other nations, that many of them circumcised themselves, in hopes they might escape, under the disguise of Jews, who were highly elevated by the king's assign-

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ing them the same day for their revenge that had been designed for their execution, that is to say, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which the Hebrews call Adar, and the Macedonians, Dystrus.

Upon the obtaining of this mandate, the princes, governors, magistrates and lieutenants, all paid a more than ordinary reverence to the Jews, for fear of the power of Mordecai.

Upon the publishing of this edict, the Jews put five hundred of their enemies to the sword at Susa, and the king shewed the queen the number of them; but there was no account taken of those that were slain elsewhere; so he proposed it to her, if she would require any thing more, for he was resolved to deny her nothing.

Her request was then, that the Jews might have one day's revenge more upon their enemies; and that the ten (*a*) sons of Haman might be hanged upon the gallows, which the king also granted for the day following, without the least hesitation; so that they gathered in troops together, upon the fourteenth, and killed near three hundred more of their adversaries, without so much as touching any of their goods; but in other places, up and down the empire, they destroyed seventy-five thousand, of those whom they reputed to be their enemies.

This slaughter was made upon the thirteenth; and, on the day following, they feasted. And so also at Susa, they celebrated the fourteenth of the following month as a great festival *.

Mordecai, upon this, sent his orders to all the Jews, under the dominion of Artaxerxes, requiring them to observe those days as festivals; and to transmit the observance of them to posterity, and thereby perpetuate its memory; as it was but reasonable to celebrate their deliverance by a solemnity of rejoicing upon the same day that it was by the treachery of Haman appointed for the massacre, and to make it a day of thanksgiving in memory, as well of the being freed from the danger, as of having their enemies given up intirely and securely into their hands.

Upon this account it is, that those

(a) Ten sons of Haman might be hanged upon the gallows. We are already told that these ten sons were slain by the sword, but the reason why Esther appears to be solicitous to have their dead bodies hung upon the gallows, might be because they had shewn more malice and indignation against the Jews, and on the day when the cruel edict came to take place, had made more desperate attacks upon them than any; though the reason of state in this severity, was doubtless to expose the family of Haman to greater infamy, and to deter other counsellors from abusing the king by false misrepresentations.

The Jews looked upon every person as accursed who was hanged on a tree, but it was considered as a profanation to suffer their bodies to remain in that state during the night, or after sun-set; but other nations let them hang until they were consumed by crows, vultures, or other ravenous creatures, as appears from the story of the Gibeonites, (2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.) and from that vulgar saying among the Romans, Pascero in cruce corvos.

* These days are still observed by the Jews, notwithstanding their being dispersed through all nations in the universe, during which time, they not only indulge themselves in all sorts of diversions, but also observe several religious ceremonies.

days are observed, which they call Phrurœa, or Purim; which is to say, feasts of observation.

Mordecai was now a man of great power with the king, both in respect of his administration, being near his person, and as an assistant and companion to the queen.

The affairs of the Jews prospered under their direction and favour, beyond all expectation, through the sanction and patronage of the mighty prince Artaxerxes.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK VIII.

WE deem it necessary, before we proceed in our history, to observe to the candid reader, that from this period, to the Incarnation of our blessed Lord and Saviour; the Jewish state and nation having undergone so many revolutions, and been so closely connected with affairs relative to foreign nations, we shall, for the future, be under an indispensable necessity of referring to the Apocryphal account; and also to that of *Josephus*, universally allowed, the most impartial and authentic historian of those times, in order to continue the series of our history, as proposed.

This we may presume to do without invalidating the sacred story; nay, by this, it will be abundantly authenticated, as the perfect agreement between sacred and profane history will thereby be rendered apparent.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

JESHUA IS SLAIN BY JOHN, THE HIGH-PRIEST. ALEXANDER THE GREAT TRANSFERS THE SEAT OF WAR FROM EUROPE INTO ASIA. BREAKS THE PERSIAN EMPIRE, BUT TREATS THE JEWS WITH AMAZING LENITY, AND MANY TOKENS OF RESPECT.

AFTER the death of *Eliashib* the High-Priest, his son *Judas*, by hereditary right, succeeded to the office, and, after his decease, the pontificate devolved on his son *John*, who was the occasion of the violation and prophanation of the temple afterwards by *Bagoses*, commander in chief of the troops of *Artaxerxes*, and of imposing a tribute upon the Jews, obliging them to allow out of the public treasure, fifty drachmas per day for every lamb they sacrificed, before they entered upon their daily offerings, which imposition was thus brought on.

John had a brother, whose name

was *Jeſhua*, and Bagoses, being very much his friend, took upon him the advancing of Jeshua to the pontificate. Jeshua depended so much upon his assurance, that he took the liberty to enter into a dispute with his brother, in the temple itself, upon this subject; and the contest proceeded so far, that his brother, in a rage, set upon him and killed him.

This was the greatest affront to religion that ever was committed, more especially by a priest; and for the farther aggravation of the scandal, it was beyond all president, either among the Greeks, or Barbarians. But God would not suffer so audacious an affront to escape unpunished. For the people lost their liberty for it, and the Persians prophaned the temple.

As soon as the news of it came to Bagoses, that the High-Priest had spilt the blood of his brother, in the very temple, he called out to the Jews in contempt and indignation, *Prophane wretches, to make ſhambles of the place of your worſhip!* At the same time pressing to get into the temple, but being opposed in his passage, he said unto them, *What, do you look upon my living body to be fouler than the carcaſs that lies here within?* And with these words he forced his way.

Upon this occasion he kept a severe hand over the Jews for seven years. But after the death of John, his son Judas came to the priesthood.

This Judas had a brother, whose name was *Manaſſes*, to whom *Sanballat*, understanding Jerusalem to be a famous city, and that the kings of it had put the Syrians and Assyrians to many difficulties, frankly gave his daughter *Nicaſa* in marriage as a test and earnest of the amity he propounded to himself with the Jews. This was that Sanballat that governed Samaria under the last *Darius*, a Chuthite born, from whence the Samarians had their original.

Philip king of Macedon being treacherously murthered about this time, by *Pauſanias*, in the city of Ægea; *Alexander* his son succeeded to the government, and crossing the Hellespont, gave Darius a total overthrow at the river Granicus. After which he subdued Lydia and Ionia, and passing his army through Caria, he entered into Pamphylia.

The elders of Jerusalem were at this time very much unsatisfied with the brother of Judas, the High-Priest, for taking to wife a strange woman, insomuch that the disgust had almost occasioned a tumult, as it looked like a step toward the abolition of their country's laws about marriages, because if they had suffered it to go on, it would by degrees become a custom. Nor had they forgotten that this very thing was the cause of their former captivity, and of all the calamities that had ensued upon it; that is, the transgression that drew those judgments upon them, was the marrying of women that were not of their own extraction; and therefore they positively required, that Manasses should either dismiss his wife, or serve no more at the altar.

But the High-Priest and the people,

ple, being moved with indignation, after this, would not suffer Manasses to officiate at the altar; whereupon he sent to Sanballet, his father-in-law, with a profession of the great affection he had for his daughter; but assured him, at the same time, that he could not submit to lose his priesthood, and the honour that was annexed to his family, as the highest of all others in esteem among the Jews, for the sake of a wife, though never so excellent.

Sanballat told him, that he would undertake not only to secure him the exercise of the function, but advance him to the Pontificate, and establish him prince of the whole country, upon condition of owning his daughter for his wife, and that he would build a temple for him upon Mount Garizin, that overlooked Samaria and the rest of the mountains thereabouts, not inferior to that of Jerusalem. And this he took upon him to see it effected by the consent of Darius.

Manasses depended so absolutely upon this assurance, that he made no doubt at all of the performance, and so continued with his father.

Sanballat was now advanced in years, and finding many Priests and Israelites entangled in such matches, the state of Jerusalem was much troubled at it: for all those irregular people went over to Manasses, Sanballat furnished them with money, houses, land and stock, to maintain the ambition of his son-in-law.

Upon the news of Alexander's passing the Hellespont, and the famous victory he had obtained at the river Granicus; Darius, to prevent his farther progress, assembled all the troops he could levy, to obstruct his passage, with a resolution to give the Macedonians battle, before they should over-run the whole of Asia, which they intended to do; so that having passed the Euphrates with his army, and also Taurus, a mountain in Cilicia, he made necessary preparations, with a resolution to fight the enemy.

Sanballat was not a little comforted with this advance of Darius; and in a full confidence of success, told Manasses, that every thing should be made good that he had promised him, as soon as the king should return; for he was fully persuaded, (and all the Asiatics were of his opinion too) that the Macedonians, with their handful of men, would never stand the first shock. But in the event they found their mistake; for upon the armies joining, Darius was totally routed, a great part of his army lost, his mother, wife, and children, made prisoners, and himself forced to fly into Persia.

Alexander, in the mean time, marched into Syria, took Damascus, and Sidon, and laid siege to Tyre, writing to the High-Priest of the Jews, that he expected the same assistance from them which they before had allowed to Darius; and that they should provide a market for the supply of his army, where he might have necessaries for his money, assuring them that they should have no reason to repent the respect.

The answer the High-Priest returned was briefly this, that they had

had bound themselves by an oath to Darius, never to bear arms against him; and that they were tied up by that obligation for life.

Alexander was highly incensed at this reply, but went on with the siege of Tyre, not doubting of reducing it in a short time, and emboldened by this prospect, declared that on the surrender of the city, he would march against the High-Priest himself, and gave all people to understand, how far oaths were to be broken or kept. Alexander, who was indefatigable, took Tyre by assault; from whence he proceeded to besiege Gaza a Persian garrison, of which one *Babemeſes* was the governor.

When Sanballat found that Alexander was before Tyre, he took that opportunity of going over with eight thousand of his own men, to the enemy's camp, delivered up his trust, and transferred his allegiance from Darius to Alexander, who received him with open arms, and desired to know his pleasure. So Sanballat told him, that he had a son-in-law, whose name was Manasses, the brother of Judas, the High-Priest of the Jews, who together with great numbers of that people following him, desired nothing more than leave to build a temple in that province; setting forth also, that it would be Alexander's interest to permit it, if it were but to divide the power of the Jews, and to prevent commotions, for that they were numerous, and as likely to be troublesome to other kings, as they were formerly to the Syrians.

This favour was no sooner granted, than they all applied themselves to the building of the temple; Manasses was ordained to be the High-Priest, and the honour to descend to the posterity of Sanballet's daughter, as he promised to himself; but after several months spent before Tyre, and two more at Gaza, Sanballat died. Alexander upon the taking of Gaza, advanced to Jerusalem, which greatly perplexed Judas the High-Priest, who knew not how to deport himself before a prince, whom he had so highly provoked by a refusal to comply with his orders; wherefore he appointed public prayers and sacrifices to be offered up to God for his assistance and protection, and for the common welfare of the people.

On the night following God appeared to the High-Priest in a dream, bidding him be of good courage, adorn the city with flowers and garlands, and without ceremony open the gates, and cause the people to march out in white garments to meet Alexander, together with himself and the rest of the priests, in the habits of their order, depending upon Providence for the rest.

Judas, upon waking, told the citizens with great joy the substance of this revelation, and put every thing in order to attend the approach of the king. Receiving intelligence soon after, that he was drawing near toward the town, Judas advanced, together with his priests and the citizens, in pomp and solemnity, to a place that is called Sapha; that is to say, a place of prospect, because it commands

commands a view of both the city and temple. The Phenicains and Chaldeans determined on a general plunder and massacre, and vowed every instance of revenge that indignation could suggest to a victorious prince, under the sense and provocation of the affront he had received.

But in the event, they found their expectations disappointed; for, when Alexander saw, from a distance, the order of the procession, the people in white, with the priests at the head of them, in their silken robes, and the High-Priest himself in his purple stole, embroidered with gold, his mitre upon his head, and a golden plate upon his forehead, with the name of GOD engraven upon it, the majesty of the spectacle struck him with so reverend an awe, that he advanced to him in person, adored the sacred inscription, and saluted the High-Priest himself; all the Jews at the same time, with one heart and voice, saluting Alexander with loud acclamations, and gathering in multitudes about him.

The kings of Syria, and the rest that were then present, were so amazed at Alexander's behaviour, that they could hardly think he enjoyed his reason. Parmenio alone took the freedom to ask him, in a familiar way, how it came to pass that he who was adored by the whole earth should now descend to bow to a Jewish priest?

Alexander replied, I do not adore the man, but the God whom he serves. For some time past, when I was at Dion in Macedonia, I saw this man I remember, and in this very habit. I was then deliberating what course I should take to conquer Asia; and this very person bade me pass my army over the river, and be confident, that if I would take his counsel, I should make myself master of the Persian empire.

Upon the view of this man, and in this habit, I call to mind my dream at Dion, and that this is the lively figure of what I saw there in a vision, and of the person that encouraged me to this expedition; so that it is not without a divine impulse that I undertake this war; and I make no doubt of gaining my point upon the Persians, and succeeding in all things to my wish.

After this discourse to Parmenio, the king embraced Judas, and was conducted into the city by the rest of the priests, where he went up to the temple, and sacrificed in form, according to order, paying also a singular veneration to the High-Priest himself, who shewed the king, when the ceremony was over, the book of Daniel, and in it the prediction of a certain Greek, in time to come, that should make himself master of the Persian empire, which Alexander interpreted of himself; and then with great satisfaction he discharged the multitude, till the day following, at which time he called them together again, to know what request they had to make him.

The high-priest made answer, that they only desired his leave to enjoy the freedom of their own laws; and that they might be exempted from the seventh year's tribute, which was readily granted them.

They also besought him farther, to allow the same freedom to the Jews in Babylon and Media, which was likewise granted; offering them moreover, that if any of them were disposed to take up arms in his service, they should be received into his army, and enjoy the liberty of exercising their religion as before, which generosity brought great numbers over to him.

Affairs being thus settled at Jerusalem, Alexander marched with his army from place to place among the neighbouring cities, and wherever he came was well received.

The Samaritans, whose capital at that time was Sichem, and peopled by Jewish deserters, observing how honourably Alexander treated the Jews, began to think themselves of acknowledging his government, and returning to their former profession; for these people were even disposed to change with the revolution of success; who, when they found the Jews in distress, thus argued: they are strangers to us; we have nothing to do with them.

But as soon as ever fortune smiled upon them, they claimed kindred, and valued themselves upon the very heraldry of their descent from Joseph and his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Alexander was hardly out of the city, when the Sichemites, in great pomp and parade, and with wonderful joy in their looks, presented themselves before him, in company with the troops that Sanballat had sent over to him; requesting the king, that he would vouchsafe to honour their city and temple with his presence.

The king spoke them fair, and promised to visit them; but upon their desiring an immunity of the seventh years tribute, as they did not sow that year, Alexander, asked, what countrymen the petitioners were? They told them they were Hebrews, but that they were called Sichemites by the Sidonians.

The question was put to them again, whether they were Jews or not? They answered no. Whereupon Alexander said, I have granted this to the Jews. But however, when I come back again, I shall do what I think reasonable, upon a fuller information of the matter.

The Sichemites were dismissed; but he took Sanballat's men along with him into Egypt, allotting them a distribution of lands to live upon there, which they had afterwards in Thebes, where they were put in garrison.

After the death of Alexander, the empire was parted among the successors, only the temple near Garizin remained untouched. And if any time the Jews at Jerusalem, were found guilty of the violation of their laws, as in eating of forbidden meats, the breach of the sabbath, or the like; they took sanctuary with the Sichemites, upon a pretence that they were unjustly accused.

About this time the high-priest Judas died; and Onias his son succeeded him in that dignity.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

JERUSALEM IS SURPRISED BY PTOLEMY WHO TRANSPLANTS DIVERS COLONIES OF THE INHABITANTS INTO EGYPT, AND HONOURS MANY OF THEM WITH PLACES OF TRUST AND IMPORTANCE. PERPETUAL WARS BETWEEN THE JEWS OF JERUSALEM AND THE SAMARITANS. DIVERS INSTANCES OF REGARD AND RESPECT SHEWN TO THE JEWS BY KING PTOLEMY.

WHEN Alexander king of Macedon had made himself absolute master of the Persian empire, and settled the affairs of the Jews, he departed this life, and left the empire broken, and parcelled out into many principalities. Asia fell to Antigonus. Babylon, with the countries bordering upon it, to *Seleucus*. The Hellespont to *Lysimachus*, Macedon to *Cassander*, and Egypt to *Ptolemy*, the son of *Lagus*. Upon this division there ensued a long war between these several princes, who were all competitors for the sovereign command, to the ruin of several considerable cities, and the loss of many lives.

The whole tract of Syria was abundantly sensible of this misery, under the government of Ptolemy, otherwise called the Saviour, (though never any man had less pretence to that title than himself.) This was he who made himself master of Jerusalem by a stratagem, upon a sabbath day; * under a colour of devotion, he treacherously possessed himself of the city without the least apprehension of any danger, which made his entrance as easy as his administration afterwards was tyrannical and barbarous.

But Ptolemy carried away many captives out of the mountainous part of Judea, from about Jerusalem, Samaria, and the mountain Garizin, which he transported into Egypt; and then reflecting upon the solemn nature of an oath among the Jews, by their fidelity to Darius, even after his overthrow, notwithstanding the summons, and the invitation of Alexander to come over to him, he disposed of them into strong holds, garrisons, and places of trust, upon their oath of fidelity, to be true to him and his successors; granting them also immunities and privileges in Alexandria, in common with the Macedonians; so that betwixt the temptation of Ptolemy's liberality on the one hand, and the pleasure and convenience of a fruitful country on the other, there came over a great number of Jews into Egypt, from other parts.

But the Jews and the Samaritans could never be reconciled concerning

* *Agatharchides* the Cuidian confirms this in his history of the successors of Alexander, when he imputes the loss of their country and liberties to their vanity and superstition. His words are these:

There are a people that are known by the name of Jews, and have their habitation in a great and well fortified city called Jerusalem. These men fell into the hands of Ptolemy, and subjected themselves to a cruel slavery upon a fantastical scruple of conscience, that would not suffer them to take up arms against an oppressor in their own defence, upon that day.

their

their ancient laws and constitutions; the one insisting, that the temple at Jerusalem was the only holy place, and the Jews not allowed to send their sacrifices any where else; the other declared for the temple at Garizin, insomuch, that there was a great deal of blood spilt upon the occasion.

On the demise of Ptolemy, surnamed the *Saviour*, *Philadelphus* his son succeeded to the government of Egypt. He reigned thirty-nine years, and gave orders for the translating the law into the Greek tongue.

There were at this time captives in Egypt, to the number of a hundred and twenty thousand Jews, whom Philadelphus commanded to be set at liberty upon the following occasion.

Demetrius Phalereus having under his care and trust the king's library, made it his business to make a collection of all books that were extant.

This being the peculiar bias of his disposition, he bought up all the choicest books, which he deemed worthy of the king's perusal. The king, on a certain occasion, enquired of his librarian, how many thousand volumes he thought he had got? He told him two hundred thousand; but that he hoped in a short time to make them five hundred thousand: as he was certainly informed, that there was a great number of choice manuscripts among the Jews, concerning their laws, customs and ceremonies, worthy his perusal, and the honour of a place in the royal library. But being written in their own language, it would be a matter of great difficulty to translate them into Greek; for though there might seem to be some resemblance and affinity between the language and writing of one and of the other, there were yet idioms peculiar to each, and distinct from the other.

He added farther, this invaluable circumstance should by no means discourage a laudable attempt to translate them into the Greek, especially as there was money in the treasury sufficient to defray the expences incident to the undertaking.

The king highly commended this project of Demetrius; and wrote to the High-Priest of the Jews to give him his assistance in providing those copies.

There was one *Ariſtæus*, a particular confident of the king's, who on account of his great modesty, had his master's ear and confidence. This person had been a long time very desirous of procuring the liberty of the Jews; and, embracing this opportunity, applied first to *Sosibius*, *Tarantinus*, and *Andraes*, three captains of the guards, to try how they stood affected; and upon finding them well disposed, he besought them earnestly to assist him with their interest, toward the doing of so good an office; upon which assurance he addressed himself to the king after this manner:

If I may preſume, Sir, to lay my thoughts at your royal feet, in all ſimplicity, and without diſguiſe, ſince it is your pleaſure, that the laws of the Jews be not only tranſcribed, but tranſlated, to anſwer your preſent purpoſe,

purpoſe, I cannot ſee how it can be fairly done, while ſo many of that nation are in bondage under your government, from whom you require and expect ſo neceſſary an aſſiſtance and ſervice.

It ſeems to me to be an act worthy of your magnificence and goodneſs, to ſet theſe poor people at liberty from their preſent miſery; for by all that ever I could underſtand, the ſame God that orders and over-rules your government, is the author of their laws; and both we and they worſhip the ſame Creator and Almighty power, only under the name of Jupiter, or Jove, à Juvando, whoſe power ſupports us in life.

Wherefore may you be pleaſed, out of a reverence to that God whom they love and worſhip with a zeal and affection beyond all other mortals, to reſtore theſe wretched exiles to their own country, that they may end their days where they have received their birth, as in the place where Providence had ſettled them.

I do not preſume, Sir, to interpoſe on their behalf out of any partiality, upon the account of tribe or extraction, but in conſideration that the ſame God is the Creator of us all, and that ſo noble an act of your royal clemency would be acceptable even to God himſelf.

The king then asked him, how many thousands there were that would stand in need of this indulgence; Andreas, being present, made answer, that he believed there might be a hundred and twenty thousand souls.

Well, say the king to Aristœus, and dost thou take this for so moderate a request?

Sosibius, and the rest that were present, observed, that it would be an action becoming the dignity of so great a prince, to be merciful to others, in acknowledgment of the honour that he himself had received from above.

The king was so well pleased with this proposal, that he ordered an allowance of a hundred and twenty drachmas to the soldiers for every Jew they had in custody, to be made good to them on the next pay-day, over and above their stipend, with a further promise to answer the desire of Aristœus, and (or, in truth, the appointment of the Almighty,) in points to ratify the whole by a public edict, wherein should be comprehended, not only those which his father, or his army, had carried away, but those also, that either before, or since that time, had been taken into captivity.

His friends told him, that at this rate these people would stand him in at least four hundred talents. But the king scrupled not that sum, to effect so glorious an undertaking; for, said he, the thing shall be done.

The following is a copy of the proclamation:

It is our royal will and pleaſure, that all the Jews whatſoever, that have been ſubdued, or taken by any of my father's forces, upon their incurſions into Syria or Phenice; and thoſe brought away or ſold into any of my dominions. Likewiſe thoſe that either before or ſince that time have been ſo ſold or enſlaved, be ſet free,

free, upon the payment of one hundred and twenty drachmas for every ſuch ſlave; the ſoldiers to receive this redemption money, together with their pay, and the reſt out of the treaſury; for the forcing many people away into captivity, and the revenging of their country by the outrage and licence of the ſoldiers, for the ſake purely of the pillage and booty, was a courſe that my father undoubtedly neither intended nor approved, and a thing contrary to common equity and reaſon; wherefore, out of a reverence to the memory of my father, and a commiſeration of the poor and weak that ſuffer under the power of oppreſſion and violence.

I do now, hereby ſtrictly charge and command, that all the Jews that are at this time in ſervitude, be immediately diſmiſſed, upon the payment of the aforeſaid ſum to their reſpective maſters, in obedience to this our mandate, without any fraud whatſoever.

And farther, that this our proclamation be made public for three days ſucceſſively, after the receipt of it; and in the mean time, that the aforeſaid maſters bring in a liſt of their ſlaves to ſuch officers, and in ſuch manner as we ſhall find moſt for our purpoſe.

And all this to be done upon the peril of the confiſcation of his goods, if any man ſhall be found acting contrary to the tenor hereof.

Upon the first sight of this grant, the king observed, that the provision for the liberty of those that were taken either before, or after, was not so particularly expressed, but there was room to evade it; so that he, of his own generosity and good pleasure, superadded a latitude of indulgence in those cases, and gave positive orders to the collectors of the tribute, and the officers of his treasury, to have the money in readiness for the ransom of the Jews.

Within seven days the whole work was accomplished at the king's charge, to the value of four hundred and sixty talents; the masters insisted upon the same price for the children, that they had for the rest, though the king's edict extended no farther than to those that were brought away prisoners, without comprehending such as were born there.

When the illustrious design was thus far executed, with the strictest justice and honour, the king commanded Demetrius to publish his royal will and pleasure concerning the translation of the Jewish books, and records, so that the librarian caused his petition to be registered, setting forth the presents that were made towards the promotion of the great work.

Now the petition aforesaid ran in terms to this purpose.

DEMETRIUS TO THE GREAT KING.

SINCE it is your royal will and command, that I ſhould do my endeavour to ſupply what may be yet farther added toward the perfection of your library, and to find out what curious and uſeful books and copies may have hitherto eſcaped my ſearch and enquiry, this is humbly to inform

form your majesty, that after much study and thought upon this matter, I do not find any thing so conducive to your present purpose, as the history of the Jewish laws; for being written in Hebrew characters, it will be hard for us to understand them. Besides, the version we have already of them, is not so correct as it should be, for want of a royal authority and encouragement toward the making of them known; so that it will be necessary to have them accurately translated, as being a body of the wisest and most perfect laws that are extant, God himself having been the author of them.

For this reason Hecaeus the Abderite observes, that we find in none of the poets or historians, any mention of these laws, or of the administration of them; the original and institution of them being sacred, and not to be prophaned by unhallowed lips. Wherefore your majesty may be pleased, if you should judge it meet, to write to the High-Priest of the Jews, only to send out of every tribe, six elders, whom he shall make choice of, as men best skilled in the knowledge of their constitutions and customs; that by their assistance, in the interpreting and expounding of their writings, we may be able to gather something from them to your majesty's satisfaction.

The king, upon this motion, gave directions for letters to be written to Eleazar the High-Priest, according to the proposal of Demetrius; taking notice also of the general release of all the Jews that were prisoners in Egypt.

The king also sent a present of fifty talents of gold, for cups and bowls, and gifts to a great value in precious stones, ordering those that had care of the coffers, wherein they were deposited, to let the lapidaries chuse as they thought fit; and beside all this, the king assigned a hundred talents more for sacrifices, and other services of the temple.

Upon the death of the High-Priest *Onias*, his son *Simon* succeeded to the office: he was a person of singular piety towards God, and exemplary tenderness and humanity toward mankind; from which character he was surnamed the Just. Simon lived not long, and leaving behind him only one son, a child, whose name was *Onias*, his brother Eleazar entered upon the potificate; and it was to this Eleazar that Ptolemy wrote the following letter.

KING PTOLEMY TO ELEAZAR THE HIGH PRIEST, SENDETH GREETING.

WHEREAS there were great numbers of Jews in my dominions that were brought captives hither by the Persians while they were in power; and whereas my father had so great a value for them, that he entrusted several of them with posts in his armies, and in his strong holds and garrisons, for a check upon the Egyptians, with the allowance of large pensions for their service: be it known unto you, that I myself also, have been well disposed towards the Jews, since my accession to the throne of Egypt, having

having ſet above an hundred thouſand of them at liberty, and paid the charge of their ranſoms out of my own coffers.

Some of them I have made uſe of in my army, others, as I found them diſcreet and truſty, I have entertained about my perſon, and in the court, thinking, that I can do nothing more acceptable to God, than good offices to others for his ſake, to whom I owe my government and being; wherefore out of a deſire to ſerve the Jews all over the world, to the uttermoſt of my power, I have propoſed tranſlating the books of your law into Greek, and giving the tranſlation a place in my library.

In order to the compaſſing this deſign, I ſhall eſteem it a great favour if you will make choice of ſix elders out of each of your ſeveral tribes, whom you know to have the greateſt ſkill and underſtanding in the laws, and ſend them to aſſiſt me in this tranſlation; for I promiſe myſelf, if I ſucceed in this undertaking, to gain immortal honour by it. The perſons I employ to treat with you about this affair, are Andreas, a captain of my guards, and Ariſtæus, two of my truſty and well-beloved friends, whom I have charged alſo with a preſent of a hundred talents of ſilver for you, which I ſend towards your ſacrifices and your temple. Your anſwer as ſoon as poſſible will be acceptable.

Upon the receipt of this letter Eleazar, with all the deference and reſpect imaginable, returned the following answer.

ELEAZAR THE HIGH PRIEST TO KING PTOLEMY, GREETING.

IF it be well with your moſt excellent majeſty, with your queen Arſinoe, and with your illuſtrious family, it is ſo likewiſe with your ſervants the Jews. Your moſt gracious letter is come to our hands, and we have read it in a full congregation with infinite joy and ſatisfaction, as an inſtance not only of your clemency and good-will towards a diſtreſſed people, but as a token alſo of your ſingular reverence for the worſhip of the great God.

We have received alſo by the ſame hands; that is to ſay, by the hands of Andreas and Ariſtæus your beloved and learned friends, twenty golden cups, thirty ſilver ones, five goblets, and a table to be conſecrated for the ſervice of the altar, together with a hundred talents towards the charge of ſacrifices, and other ſervices for the temple; all which we have ſhewed and repreſented unto our brethren, in the moſt affectionate terms of gratitude and reſpect; and we are all ſo ſenſible of the great obligations you have been pleaſed to lay upon us, that you may depend on our readineſs to ſerve and obey you in all things without reſerve, to the uttermoſt of our power, in a juſt acknowledgment of your grace and goodneſs.

Purſuant to this ſenſe and conſciouſneſs of our duty, we have recommended unto God in our public prayers, the protection of your royal perſon, queen, and children, together with

with all that are near and dear to you, wiſhing peace and proſperity to yourſelf and people; and beſeeching God, that the work you have now in hand, of compiling a collection and hiſtory of our laws and antiquities, may be of as much ſatisfaction and advantage to you as your own heart can deſire.

In order to this I have ſent ſix elders out of every tribe, with the laws, to attend your pleaſure, ſubmitting ourſelves upon the whole to your piety and juſtice, that after the tranſcribing of them, they may be returned to us ſafe by the ſame bearer; recommending your majeſty to the Providence of the Almighty.

This was the High-Priest's answer to the king's letter, to which were subjoined, the names of the seventy elder that were sent by Eleazar upon this occasion, which names we need not enumerate in this place. But it would be doing injustice to the character and memory of this generous and pious prince, to omit in this part of our history the many and valuable presents he made upon the occasion, together with the extraordinary diligence and ardour he exerted in the promotion of the magnificent undertaking. As a memorial therefore of the same, we cite the following particulars, beginning with the golden table.

As to the dimensions, the king sent his artificers to learn out the measure of the former table at Jerusalem, and to see whether the place would not admit of a larger. They brought him word that he might make it as large as he pleased; whereupon he proposed to himself to make this five times larger than the other. But considering, that so great a bulk might possibly make it too cumbersome and unweildy for daily use, and look more like a work of ostentation than for service, he came to a resolution with respect to the dimension.

Now the king was well versed in the nature and reason of things, and enjoyed such a presence of thought, for the finding out of expedients and new inventions, that it was a common practice with him to form his own designs, and prescribe to the very workmen themselves, their precise rules and measures; so that for the proportions of this table, he ordered it to be two cubits and a half in length, and one and an half in height; all of solid gold, and round about it a border to be made of a hand's breadth, set out on three sides with curious carving of flower works, twisted strings, and other agreeable figures; which being triangular, were likewise so equal and just, that turn it which way you would, (as it was easily transposed,) the prospect would be the same.

This table was delicately wrought all over, especially the parts of it that were most in sight; with an intermixture of precious stones looped together by golden buckles, to the string work before-mentioned, at equal distances one from another. The outside of it was set with other rich stones of an oval cut, and an embossed work of twigs and branches creeping round the table. There were also several sorts of

fruits wrought together under the figure of a crown, as bunches of grapes, ears of corn, pomegranates, &c. all in their proper and natural position, and expressed by stones set in gold, bearing the native colour of what they represented. Under this crown was another row of ovals; which, for the matter, the order, and ornament, was so like the former, and so exactly uniform, that there was no distinguishing one part from the other. Under the table from side to side, there passed a golden plate of four fingers breadth; and into this plate the feet were fastened with springs and hooks to keep them firm and steady, by binding the cover and the frame together.

There was drawn also upon this table the resemblance of a meander, the course of which was marked out with stones of lustre and value; rubies, emeralds, and whatever else was most precious or excellent in their kind. Along this meander there were divers pieces of sculpture in bows and knots, which were so embellished by an orderly disposition of chrystal and amber, for the advantage of the view, that it made altogether one of the most agreeable spectacles imaginable.

The cornishes of the feet had the resemblance of a lilly work, the stem upright, with the leaves and tendrils winding under the table.

The basis was a hand's breadth over, garnished with rubies, and a border round about it; and two hands distance between the feet that rested upon it.

The graving work of these feet was incomparable, being the fancy of a foilage of the vine and the ivy, so exquisitely executed, with grapes and berries, that it was hard to distinguish them. But upon the least breath of air, the leaves would move and play, as if it had been the work of nature rather than art.

This table consisted of three parts, which were so artificially put together, that there was no joints to be discerned, or so much as to be imagined where they met, and the thickness of it was half a cubit.

This great prince convinced all, by the magnificence of his present, the inestimable value of the materials, and the exquisite curiosity and perfection of the whole work, that what he abated of his first project in size and proportion, was abundantly supplied by a most munificent expence in art and ornament.

There was also a pair of large golden cups, wrought half way to the bowl, and inlaid with all sorts of precious stones, orderly ranged into the resemblance of a meander of a cubit over, with delicate figures of twigs, branching out into a kind of net-work, up to the brim, and interlaced with several curious designs, about four fingers broad, and adorned with stones of value, as before; the borders were also set with an intermixture of lillies, flowers, vines, grapes, and the like, round the lips of the vessel.

This was the form of finishing of these goblets; and for the contents, they held three or four gallons a-piece; and

and the silver pieces, were so glorious and radiant, that no chrystal was comparable to them.

The king, after all this, furnished thirty golden vessels more, richly adorned with precious stones, and overshadowed with vine and ivy-leaves in curious sculpture.

Neither was the excellency of these miraculous pieces, wholly ascribed to the design and mastery of the artificer; but the king himself took a kind of pleasure in contributing to the perfection of this work, making it a great part of his care and business, to visit the shops, and superintend the masters themselves in the execution of their charge, which rendered them much more industrious and intent upon their business, when they saw the king himself had a more than ordinary regard and concern for the prosecution of the glorious undertaking.

Upon the delivery of these donations, and the dedication of them to the use and service of the holy temple at Jerusalem, Eleazar treated the king's commissioners with all due honour and acknowledgment, and then dismissed them with good wishes and presents, to return to their master.

The king had no sooner heard of their arrival at Alexandria, and that they had brought the seventy elders with them, than he sent for his two embassadors, Andreas and Aristæus, from whom he received Eleazar's letter and particular satisfaction to many questions relating thereunto. His mind was so bent upon an immediate conference with the seventy persons that were sent over to him to interpret the laws, that no person had access to him upon any particular business, which was contrary to his usual custom of giving private audience once in five days, and public once a month.

Having thus secured himself from any of those casual interruptions, he waited the arrival of Eleazar's agents, who attended him soon after with presents from the High Priest, and certain manuscripts of the Jewish laws, written upon parchment in golden letters.

Upon the king's asking for the books, they were produced to his admiration at the curiosity of the work; for the leaves were so artificially put together, that there was no discerning where one skin was joined to another. His majesty at the same time telling them, that he had a great respect for the person that brought him that piece of exquisite workmanship, and a greater yet for him that sent it; but the greatest reverence of all for the author of those laws that were now produced.

The deputies and their assistants gave the king, with one heart and voice such moving instances, by their joint prayers and acclamations, of their zeal for the glorious institution for the service, that he could not forbear weeping at the tenderness of their respect.

The writings were then put into the hands of the officers that were to have them in charge, and the king embracing the deputies, told them, that he would only in the first place speak a word or two to the business

siness they came about, and after that take their persons into his peculiar care; as he looked upon the day of their arrival as so great a Providence to him, he resolved to have it observed all the days of his life, as an anniversary festival in commemoration of the blessing. And it happened to fall out upon the very day of his naval victory over *Antigonus*.

The king, in fine, told them that they should be his guests, and ordered them the most magnificent apartments in his own palace.

The care of entertaining and providing for strangers was properly Nicanor's province, who appointed Dorotheus under him in this, as in other cases, to see that every thing was conducted with decorum.

It was a maxim with this prince always to entertain strangers according to the customs and manners of their respective countries; orders were therefore given that the elders should be strictly treated according to this rule.

The conduct of the entertainment was therefore committed to Dorotheus, as a person well versed in the manner and customs of the Jews.

There were, in the first place, two seats, one on the king's right hand, the other on his left, by his own order, with all becoming deference to the commissioners.

When the guests had taken their places, the king bade Dorotheus serve them after the same manner, as he had formerly served their countrymen upon the like occasion; so that the Egyptian priests and officers that usually attended the king upon these occasions, were all discharged, and one of their own deputies and priests, *Eliſa* by name, was called upon by the king himself to pronounce the benediction, upon the table, who thereupon stood up to give God thanks; after which solemnity, and a fervent prayer for the happiness of the king, and his people, to the infinite satisfaction of all that were present, the company fell cheerfully to the fare that was provided for them.

The king took occasion, while they were at dinner, to start several philosophical questions, to pass from one subject to another, in order to sound their judgment and experience. The commissioners were so pertinent to every point, that the king took great delight in their conversation, and they continued feasting and rejoicing for the space of twelve days *.

The excellency of their judgment had wonderful effect, not only upon the king, but brought over *Menedemus* the philosopher to acknowledge an over-ruling Providence, and to put a final end to that controversy; the king acknowledging himself to be so exceedingly edified by the conversing with these people, that they had instructed him in the very art of government, and therefore ordered them a gratuity of three talents a man; and then they were con-

* If any person is disposed to know the particulars of this event, we refer him to a book of Aristæus, expressly writ upon this subject.

ducted

ducted to their respective apartments.

At the end of three days, Demetrius took them with him by a causeway of seven furlongs in length, and a bridge of communication between the island and the continent, and advancing from thence northward, settled them in a house by the sea-side, where they might be free from noise or disturbance, the retreat, in fine, being very commodious for men of study and contemplation. When they were disposed of in this commodious manner, he requested of them, that they would immediately apply to the interpretation, bidding them God's speed, in the arduous undertaking.

They spared neither care nor pains, but kept close to their studies from day-break till three in the afternoon, which was their time of refreshment. Dorotheus not forgetting, according to the king's order, to supply them with delicacies from his own table, over and above a competency of provisions at the king's ordinary allowance.

It was their custom to wait upon the king every morning at his levee, and thence to betake themselves to their tasks again, washing their hands with sea water, before they entered upon their business.

This version of the law was finished within the compass of seventy two days, at the expiration of which, Demetrius called all the Jews together into the place where it was translated, and in the presence of the interpreters, read over the book, the assembly unanimously approving of the interpretation, and extolling Demetrius as the occasion of the great advantages they had received.

He also desired that it might be read by the eminent men of the nation, and after this the High-Priest, the elders, and the magistrates of the people proposed, that since the translation was so happily finished, the authority of it might be ratified, and the text remain unalterable for ever.

They also came to an unanimous resolution, that the book should be subjected to a farther examination and revise. And if there should be found any thing in it, either redundant or defective, it might, upon mature consideration, be rectified; but that upon a farther approbation, it should stand good for ever.

The king was hereby doubly pleased; first, for the gaining of his point; and, secondly, that it succeeded so happily to the advantage of the public.

But when he came to hear it read to him, he was transported with joy, in the contemplation of the wisdom of the law-giver, and entered into a discourse with Demetrius, in which he declared his firm persuasion, that neither any historian or poet could ever frame such incomparable laws.

Demetrius made answer, that the form of them being so manifestly divine, and the subject of them so venerable, people were afraid of meddling with them, especially considering what judgments had befallen several people for their temerity in prophaning them; as Theopompus, acting the part of a plagiary, in

publishing texts of holy writ as his own invention, was struck with a fit of madness that held him thirty days; and in the intervals of his phrenzy, was conscious of the sin, and asked God forgiveness for it, having revelations also in his sleep that it was his audacious curiosity, in confounding sacred things with prophane, that brought this distemper upon him.

But, in fine, upon his repentance, and amendment, he was restored again to his right mind. And so it fared likewise with *Theodectus* the poet, who being struck blind upon the intermixing of divine writ with tragedy, was, upon the acknowledgment of his sin, restored to his sight again.

The king, upon the receipt of these books from Demetrius, blessed God and worshipped, giving a strict command for the preserving of them safe and entire; desiring the interpreters also, that he might see them again as often as they could upon a visit; assuring them, that it should turn to their honour as well as their advantage.

He was obliged at present, he said, to part with them; but whenever they should come hereafter for their pleasure, they should not fail of such an acknowledgment as might become wise men to receive, and a great prince to give.

Upon this the king dismissed them with a present to each of them, of three rich suits of raiment, * two talents of gold, the value of one talent in cups; couches to sit and eat upon, with presents likewise for the High-Priest, of ten beds with silver feet, and suits of furniture belonging to them; a chalice of thirty talents, ten purple robes, a glorious crown, and a hundred pieces of fine linen, besides cups and goblets of several sorts, and two golden vessels, dedicated to the service of the temple; desiring the High-Priest by letter, that if any of these commissioners should be disposed to revisit him in any future time, he would grant them his permission, as he had a high esteem for the conversation of learned men, and could not think his favours better bestowed than upon so venerable a body.

CHAP. III.

VARIOUS INSTANCES OF RESPECT FROM THE MOST POTENT PRINCES OF THE EAST TOWARDS THE JEWS. THEIR CAUSES ESPOUSED BY THE ROMANS. THEIR VARIOUS FORTUNES. JOSEPH, THE SON OF ONIAS, DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF ON DIVERS ACCOUNTS, AND BRINGS HIS COUNTRYMEN THE JEWS INTO GREAT REPUTE AND ESTIMATION.

THE Jews were in great esteem among the kings of Asia, both for their fidelity and skill in military affairs, insomuch that *Seleucus*, surnamed *Nicanor*, gave them the privileges of freemen in all the cities he

* The learned are not agreed what talent, is here meant, but if it was the Egyptian, it amounted in English money to seven thousand three hundred pounds.

built

built throughout Asia, and the lower Syria; nay, in the metropolis of Antioch, declaring it to be his will and pleasure, that they should enjoy the same rights and immunities with the Greeks and Macedonians.

As for example, the Jews being prohibited the use of foreign oil, the Olympic officers, who had the ordering of that affair, were obliged by the government to allow them so much money in lieu of it.

The people of Antioch insisted upon the abrogating of that custom the following war. But *Mutianus*, who was then governor of the province of Syria, would not suffer it.

In the reign of *Vespasian* and his son *Titus*, the people of Alexandria would have had the Jews disfranchised: but such was the honour and justice of the Romans, and especially of those two magnanimous princes before-mentioned, that they could not obtain it; not that they wanted either pretence or provocation for a revenge upon a people who had long annoyed them, by a troublesome war, and so obstinate a rebellion. But they looked upon their rites and privileges to be still sacred; and therefore refused to gratify either their own passions, or the importunity of two great nations with any vindictive act of injustice.

They laid more weight upon the sense of their ancient merits, than upon that of their present misdemeanor, and would not do a mean thing, to promote the most considerable interest.

They observed, that those who had taken up arms against the Romans, had suffered enough by the calamities of war, without any other forfeiture; and that to punish those who had not offended, would be offering violence to common sense and justice *.

Under the reign of *Antiochus* the great, Asia, Judea, and Celo-Syria, were involved in perpetual broils; for Antiochus being at that time in actual hostility with Philopator Ptolemy, and his son Ptolemy, sirnamed Epiphanes, the Jews, between the prosporous and adverse fortune of Antiochus, were still sure to be sufferers, though Antiochus, in the end, prevailed, and made himself master of Judea.

In process of time, after the death of Philopator, his son sent a great army into Celo-Syria, under the command of *Scopas*, at the head of the river Jordan, and recovered the places in Celo-Syria and Samaria, which Scopas had lost possession of before.

The Jews upon this success sur-

* We read likewise to the same purpose of Marcus Agrippa's good affection to the Jews, for when the Jonians, in a seditious animosty against those people, went to them with a remonstrance, that their city being singly and entirely their own, by the gift of Antiochus the grandson of Seleucus, whom the Grecians sirnamed the god, they desired to be put in possession of it with peculiar privileges, exclusive of all other people; demanding farther, that if the Jews should pretend to the same immunities, it might be upon condition of their worshipping the same gods.

The Jews brought the question to an issue, Nicholaus of Damascus being of their council, who obtained judgment for them in favour of the right they claimed to the free exercise and enjoyment of their own laws and customs; Agrippa pronouncing upon the whole matter, that he could not agree to any innovation upon that point.

Those who would be farther satisfied in the series of this transaction, may read the whole story at large in Nicholaus's history, B. 123, 124, as quoted by Josephus.

rendered

rendered themselves, received the army into their city, provided plentifully for the elephants, and valiantly assisted in the attack of the castle, where Scopas had left a body of men in garrison.

Antiochus thought it but reasonable to gratify the Jews with some honourable token of the sense he had of their good-will and services upon this occasion, and therefore wrote to such of his friends and officers as were witnesses of the obligations they had laid upon him; giving them to understand in the said letters, what kind of requital he intended to make them.

As a proof of the esteem which Antiochus retained for the Jewish nation, we deem it necessary to insert the following letter.

KING ANTIOCHUS TO PTOLEMY GREETING.

WHEREAS we have received several instances of the good disposition and affection of the Jews toward us and our service, from the time of our first coming into their country, which they have expressed by their magnificence, and respect of their elders and magistrates, in attending us upon the way, the splendid reception of our person and army into the city, and the ample provision they made, both for our horses and elephants, assisting us likewise against the garrison of the Egyptians in the castle. These good officers being duly considered, we esteem ourselves bound in honour to bestow upon them some distinguishing marks of our acknowledgment and favour, by contributing towards the repairing of their miserable city, and restoring it to its former state of magnificence and glory, by recalling all their countrymen, wherever dispersed, to their former habitations.

In order to the accomplishment of those ends, we have in the first place assigned twenty thousand pieces of silver toward the charges of their sacrifices, wine, oil and frankincense; and for fine flour, according to the custom of the place, one thousand four hundred and sixty measures of wheat, and three hundred and seventy-five measures of salt.

And farther, it is our will and pleasure, that all this may be executed and made good according to our order. And then for any thing that may be wanting toward the repairing of the temple, porch or galleries.

It is our desire, that the timber be supplied, whether from Judea, Libanon, or any other place, without any tax or duty.

And we do also grant them the same immunity for other materials, that may be made use of for the holy temple, with permission moreover of an universal liberty to live and govern themselves according to their country-laws.

And we do hereby respectively discharge their elders, priests, scribes, and singing-men, of poll-taxes, royal duties, and all other tributes whatsoever.

And for a further encouragement to the speedy re-peopling of this city, we do by our royal authority grant unto all the inhabitants of the same, and

to

to such others, as may come to reside there, at any time between this and the month of Hyperberetæus next ensuing, a total exemption from all public impositions for the space of three years to come; and so likewise from that time forward, an abatement of one third part of all taxes, in consideration of their past damages and sufferings.

And finally, whereas great numbers of those people have been carried away captive, and remain to this day in bondage, we do farther command, that they be forthwith set at liberty, with ample restitution, for what had been taken from them.

Nor did this benevolent prince stop here, but followed his generous declaration in favour of the people, with another edict, which he caused to be published all over his dominions, in substance as follows: *That no stranger shall presume to enter into the temple, but with the consent of the Jews, nor without being purifyed and qualified before his admittance, according to the laws of the country: that no man shall dare to bring into the city, the flesh either of horses or mules, or of asses, wild or tame; the flesh of panthers, foxes, hares, or of any other creature that the Jews are not allowed so much as to touch, nor the skins of any of them; nor to bring up, or feed any of these, or any other creature in the city, but such as their forefathers, according to God's appointment, made use of for sacrifices, upon the penalty of three thousand drachmas, to be levyed upon every offender against the said orders, for the use and benefit of the priests.*

This king also upon another eminent occasion gave the world a signal proof of the high esteem he had for the Jews.

Upon the breaking out of a commotion in Phrygia and Lydia, Zeuxes at that time commanding an army in the upland provinces, the king presently ordered his general, a person for whom he had a singular respect, to send away from Babylon a great number of the Jews there, into Phrygia, giving him his instructions in a letter to this effect:

THE KING ANTIOCHUS TO ZEUXES, HIS FRIEND AND FATHER, GREETING.

WHEREAS I am given to understand, that there are several persons who strive to raise seditions and make innovations in Phrygia and Lydia, it behoves me to provide against such casualties; so that I am now to acquaint you, that I am advised by my council, and friends, to take two thousand Jewish families out of Babylon and Mesopotamia, and to transport them into Phrygia, with their goods and whatever belongs to them, and there to place them for a guard in strong holds and garrisons, being thoroughly persuaded of their zeal and fidelity; not only from the principles of their religion, but from the proof and experience of their allegiance to my ancestors.

Wherefore, it is my pleasure, that they be forthwith transported; giving them all assurance, that they shall still enjoy the freedom of their own laws and customs.

Upon their arrival there, you are to aſſign them lands and poſſeſſions, with all conveniencies for building, planting and tillage; with an immunity alſo from all taxes and contributions, out of the profits for ten years to come.

In the mean while, till they may be able to ſupport themſelves out of the fruits of their own induſtry, you are to allow them a competent proviſion of wheat, for the maintenance of themſelves and their families; by which kind uſage they will be encouraged to act more cheerfully in our ſervice. You are finally to take care, that they be not expoſed to any ſort of trouble or moleſtation.

This is to ſhew what eſteem Antiochus the great had for the Jews: after which, there followed a league of amity and alliance between this king and Ptolemy, upon a marriage with his daughter Cleopatra, who had in lieu of a portion, Celo-Syra, Phenice, Judea and Samaria. The revenue was divided between the two kings, and framed to some of the principal men in the reſpective provinces, who took care of the collections, and paid their proportions into the king's treaſury, according to the contract.

The Samaritans were at this time haughty and powerful, and particularly troubleſome in their inroads upon the Jews; carrying ſeveral of them away captives; and this ravage was committed chiefly in the time of the high-prieſt Onias: For after the death of Eleazar, his uncle Manaſſes aſſumed the pontification; and after his death, ſucceeded Onias, the ſon of Simon the juſt; which Simon was the brother of Eleazar.

This Onias was weak and covetous, to the exceſſive degree of refuſing the king the cuſtomary tribute of twenty talents, which his anceſtors ſtill paid him, in acknowledgment of their allegiance. This behaviour of Onias, incenſed Ptolemy Euergetes the father of Philopator to ſuch a degree, that he ſent an ambaſſador expreſſly to Jeruſalem, with a menace to demand the payment of it, upon the peril of having an army quartered upon their country at diſcretion, and a new plantation ſettled there, if they did not immediately comply. This meſſage gave the Jews moſt terrible apprehenſions; but Onias braved the danger, his heart being wholly devoted to avarice and only ſet upon money.

Onias had a nephew, whoſe name was Joſeph, the ſon of Tobias, who though a young man, acquired great reputation among the Jews, for his juſtice, prudence, and integrity. Being on a certain occaſion at Phicolar the place of his birth, his mother ſent him an account of the meſſenger beforementioned, and of his buſineſs, informing him that he had inveighed againſt Onias for endangering the public peace, and not attending to the intereſt and welfare of the people, to whom he ſtood indebted for his promotion, both ſacerdotal and civil.

But however, if his heart was ſo poſſeſſed by avarice, that he would ſacrifice his country, friends and all, rather than part with his money, he adviſed him to make a dutiful application

cation to the king about it, and to try if he could get the whole, or at least some part of it remitted. Onias made answer, that he was not so fond of his place either in church or state, but he could willingly part with both, if it were permitted him, rather than go to the king upon that errand; and that for his part, he would not concern himself in the matter.

Upon the refusal of Onias, Joseph asked permission to attend, and his request being granted, he went up to the temple, where he called a congregation, and bade them take courage for he was in hopes that the failure of his uncle would have no further ill consequences; telling them, that if they thought fit, he would wait upon the king himself in their name, and do his utmost to reconcile matters between them. The whole multitude gave him thanks for the proposal, and left the business entirely to his management.

Joseph, upon this, went his way to find out the king's commissioner; and when he had treated him splendidly for some certain days, and made him rich presents, dismissed him to his master, with an assurance that he would presently follow him.

Joseph's heart was now set more and more upon this expedition, being not only encouraged and invited to it by the king's messenger, but assured also of the best service he could do him; who made no doubt at all, but that upon such an application, Joseph might probably gain his point.

This person was greatly pleased with the address of the young man; and upon his return to Egypt, reflecting upon the ingratitude of Onias, he took care to speak greatly in commendation of Joseph, who had generously taken the office upon himself, to atone for the indolence and inattention of his uncle.

In short, this minister was so taken up with the subject of Joseph's character, that the king and his wife Cleopatra, were in a manner enamoured with him before they saw him.

Upon this occasion, Joseph sent to his friends in Samaria to take up money for his equipage; which in clothes, horses, carriages, plate, and other necessaries amounted to twenty thousand drachmas.

He happened in his way to Alexandria, to fall in company with a train of the princes and nobility of Syria and Phenicia, who were at that time on their way to the king, in order to treat with him about his revenue, according to yearly custom of putting it up by way of auction to the highest bidder.

These great men ridiculed the contemptible appearance of Joseph and his retinue: but he proceeded on his way to Alexandria; and being there informed that the king was still at Memphis, prosecuted his journey, and had the good fortune to meet him sitting in his chariot with the queen, and his particular confident *Athenion*, in his return to Alexandria.

This Athenion was the person who carried the embassy to Jerusalem, and was so honourably treated by Joseph in

in that place. He therefore no sooner cast his eye upon the Hebrew, than he informed the king, that he was the very person of whom he had spoken so many excellent things at his return from Jerusalem.

Ptolemy upon this stopped and saluted him, and took him into his chariot; complaining upon the first greeting, how ill he had been used by Onias.

Sir, (said Joseph, by way of apology) *an old man is the second time a child, and I hope your majesty will impute nothing to Onias beyond that infirmity. But for the young men that are in their vigour of strength and understanding, I dare be answerable for it, that you shall not find any one of them wanting in his duty.*

The king was so delighted with this instance of Joseph's discretion and respect, upon this first interview, that he gave orders immediately for lodging him in his own palace, and entertaining him at his own table; which singular respect gave no small disgust to the envious Syrian noblemen, when they observed at Alexandria the honour that was done to Joseph.

The day of auction now arrived, when the several branches of the revenue were to be put up, and the nobility of each respective province to bid for the purchase. At length they contracted for eight thousand talents upon the duties of Celo-Syria, Phenice, Judea and Samaria.

Joseph blamed the contractors for undervaluing the composition, and offered to double the sum proposed. The king, pleased with the offer, and well disposed toward Joseph, demanded of him, what security he could give for the performance of his agreement?

Joseph replyed, that he could give him the security of persons beyond all exception. And upon the king's bidding him name them, his answer was, that he doubted not, but his majesty and the queen would be mutually bound for his honesty.

The king was so well satisfied with this ingenious way of proceeding, that he intrusted him with his revenue upon his own word, without any other sureties.

This surprizing preference of a stranger, greatly disgusted the rest of the contractors, who were much displeased at being obliged to depart without their errand.

Joseph, upon having so great trust reposed in him, desired a guard of two thousand soldiers to support him in the collectiong of the duty, in case of any opposition; which guard was granted him. And having thereupon borrowed five hundred talents of the king's friends in Alexandria, he went into Syria.

Upon his arrival at Askalon, and demanding the king's tribute, they not only refused him the money, but insolently reviled him, so that he presently caused his soldiers to take up twenty of the ringleaders, and inflicted exemplary punishment upon them; raising a thousand talents out of their forfeited estates, and sent the treasure to the king, with a particular account of what had been done.

The king so highly approved of the wise and discreet conduct of Joseph,

seph, that he entrusted him after that to do whatever he thought fit. This recent example of his severity upon the people of Askalon, wrought so effectually upon the rest of the Syrians, that they set their gates open in all places to Joseph; and without any difficulty or scruple, paid their taxes.

The inhabitants of Scythopolis followed the example of Askalon, in obstinately refusing of their customary impostiions, and contemning the king's officers and authority; so that Joseph was forced to deal with the ringleaders there, as he had done before, upon the like occasion, accounting it a point of wisdom to secure what they had got, and to make their country maintain itself.

At length, Joseph having done great honour to his country, and fully evinced his moderation, piety and justice, paid the debt of nature, to the great regret of the Jews, to whose relief and welfare he had so eminently contributed.

He executed a commission of receiver of all public duties in Syria, Phenice and Samaria, for the space of two and twenty years.

His uncle Onias died also about the same time, and his son *Simon* succeeded him in the priesthood; and upon his demise, was succeeded by his son, who was likewise named *Onias*.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE KING OF LACEDEMON CLAIMS KINDRED WITH THE JEWS, AND SEEKS ALLIANCE WITH ONIAS. VARIOUS EVENTS BEFAL THE NATION OF THE JEWS. DEMOLITION OF THE TEMPLE. APOSTACY OF GREAT NUMBERS OF THE JEWS.

ON the succession of *Onias*, the son of *Simon*, to the pontificate, *Arius*, king of the Lacedemonians, sought the friendship and alliance of the Jews, in an embassy couched in the following terms.

ARIUS KING OF THE LACEDEMONIANS TO ONIAS, HEALTH.

WHEREAS there is come to our hand an ancient manuscript, setting forth the near affinity between our ancestors and yours, and the relation in which we stand to the line of Abraham; it is but reasonable for our brethren so nearly allied, to do all good offices one toward another.

This is therefore to offer you the command of any thing within our power to serve you, as we ourselves shall take the freedom in looking upon your concerns as our own, and joining in one common interest.

You are to receive this letter from our trusty subject and servant Demoteles, written on a quarto page, and sealed with the figure of an eagle holding a dragon in her talons.

After the death of Joseph, the people broke out into mutinies and

seditions, upon the quarrel of the sons that he had left behind him; the elder brothers making war upon the younger. The major part of the people appeared also in favour of the former; and, among the rest, *Simon* the High-Priest, upon account of his relation.

His son *Hyrcanus* did not think fit to return to Jerusalem, but kept himself still beyond Jordan, where he maintained a perpetual war with the Arabians, killing great numbers of them, and carrying others into captivity. He caused a marvellous strong castle to be erected there; the walls, from the bottom to the top, being all of white stone, with figures upon them of several sorts of creatures, of an extraordinary size and proportion.

This building was encompassed with a deep ditch, or moat, and vaults cut out through a mountain just opposite to it, of several furlongs in length, and only broad enough at the mouth for one man to enter at a time, which they did both for fear and security.

There were also in this castle places for entertainment and lodging; variety of fountains both for pleasure and ornament; large courts, stately buildings, and spacious gardens. To this place thus elegantly completed he gave the name of Tyre, which lies upon the borders of Arabia and Judea beyond Jordon, and not far from the country of the Essebonites. Hyrcanus held this government for the space of seven years; during which Seleucus reigned in Syria. After his death his brother Antiochus, otherwise called Epiphanes, succeeded him, at which time died Ptolemy also, king of Egypt, who was likewise called Epiphanes.

This Ptolemy left two sons behind him, both of them minors; the name of the elder was *Philometor*, and the name of the other *Physcon*. Antiochus was at that time very strong and powerful; insomuch, that Hyrcanus, for fear of being called to an account for his inroads upon the Arabians, laid violent hands upon himself, and Antiochus took possession of all his goods and estate.

Onias the High-Priest dying about this time, Antiochus Epiphanes advanced his brother *Jesus* to the pontificate, his own son being at that time a minor. This Jesus fell under the king's displeasure, who deposed him from the pontificate, and transferred it afterwards to Onias the younger brother. Now these were the three sons of Simon, and they all arrived to the dignity of the Priesthood; but Jesus chose rather to take upon himself the name of *Jason*, as the other changed his name for *Menelaus*.

In this confused state of things, one brother advanced a faction against the other, and the people divided upon it. The son of Tobias sided with the new High-Priest Menelaus; but the greater part of the multitude joined with Jason, and so much overpowered the other, that Menelaus and the sons of Tobias withdrew to Antioch, declaring themselves that they would no longer be tied up to their country's laws and institutions, but go over to the religion of their king, and the Greek way of worship;

worship: desiring liberty to erect a kind of academy, or place for public exercises in Jerusalem. Upon the obtaining of this licence, they so disguised their bodies, that even naked, there was no visible difference between them and the Greeks, at the same time casting off all regard to the Jewish laws and customs, and betaking themselves to the manners of other nations.

Antiochus finding himself at this time so easy at home, and his people so well settled, resolved to try an expedition into Egypt, partly fom an ambition to make himself master of the country, and partly from a reliance on the weakness and inability of Ptolemy's sons, to manage such a war; so that he advanced with a mighty army to Pelusium, where he circumvented *Philometor* by craft, and advanced into Egypt, and from thence to Memphis, and other neighbouring places, which he likewise reduced; and then proceeded to Alexandria, with a design to reduce at once both the king and the city; but upon the peremptory command of the Romans, to withdraw his army immediately, at his peril, he gave over his design, and betook himself to his country, and quitted what he had taken, as we have said heretofore.

Antiochus, at his return from Egypt, from whence he was affrighted by the menaces of the Romans, marched with his army to Jerusalem, and entered the city, in the hundred and forty-third year, from the time that the kingdom of Syria fell into the family of Seleucus.

He made himself master of it without any difficulty; for the gates were set open to him, by the treachery of a party he made in the town, where he exercised great cruelty, and put many people to the sword, without regard to sex or age, pillaged the city, and carried the treasure away to Antioch.

This calamity happened in the second year after the taking of the city, and in the hundred and fortieth from the first Seleucus. In this furious outrage, they did not spare even those who quietly open the gates to them, for the greater liberty of breaking in upon the riches of the temple, where the spoil was so considerable, that the value, they thought, might in some degree atone for the treachery.

In short, the temple was wholly stripped and riffled, all the holy vessels and utensils were taken away; nay, the very hiding-places, where they concealed an immense treasure, were all laid open, and not so much as any relick left of this prodigious wealth. And farther, to consummate the misery of these poor people, their daily sacrifices, were forbidden, the city levelled with the ground, the inhabitants partly killed, partly carried away captives, together with their wives and children, to the number of ten thousand; their walls demolished, and their stately edifices consumed by fire.

He erected a tower in the city that overlooked and commanded the temple itself; and when he had supplied and fortified the place, put a strong garrison of Macedonians into it, but not without a mixture of execrable

and

and apostate Jews, that were as malicious as the very worst of their enemies.

He raised an altar in the temple, and sacrificed hogs upon it in a most spiteful contradiction to the laws and constitutions of the Jews.

He forced all people to extremities, who would not renounce the true God, and worship his idols. And so in all their other cities and towns, he built temples and altars for the daily sacrifice of swine's flesh.

He made it a most grievous penalty for any Jew to circumcise their children, keeping informers, either to prosecute, or extort from them an obedience by terror or force, so that the major part of the Jews, either by their own accord, or fear of punishment, complyed with these orders, though some stood bravely against all trials or torment, and death itself, rather than depart from their religion and laws. Some had their bodies cut and torn with whips, and then crucified alive, with their wives, and so many of their children as were circumcised, hanging about their necks, according to the king's order. The holy scriptures were destroyed also wherever they were found; and it was made death so much as to entertain them.

The Samaritans, conformable to the character we have before given of them, when they found the Jews reduced to so miserable a state of distress, for fear of being brought to bear a share in their calamities, immediately disclaimed all kindred with them, disowning the temple of Garizin for the temple of God; and alledging themselves to be the race (as indeed they were) of the Medes and Persians.

To enforce the belief of which, and in order to take off the danger, apprehended upon this occasion, they sent a solemn embassy and address to Antiochus, in these terms.

TO KING ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOD, THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE SIDONIANS, INHABITANTS OF SICHEM, SHEWETH.

THAT the forefathers of your petitioners, lying under the affliction of many and grievous plagues in their own country, were partly wrought upon by that calamity, and in part prevailed upon by the superstition of an ancient custom, to join in the religious observance of a certain festival, which the Jews call the Sabbath, and in the erecting of the temple upon the mountain Garizin, where sacrifices were offered to God without a name.

Now, that your majesty hath been pleased to inflict a punishment upon this wicked people, suitable to the heinousness of their offences, and to appoint officers, who upon a supposition that we were of the same stock, are thereby induced to involve your petitioners with the Jews in the same crime; whereas we derive our original from the Sidonians, as we can make appear by record, extant to this day.

May it please your majesty, to grant such order to Appollonius our governor, in favour of your petitioners, that

that they may not be any farther moleſted for the future, upon the ſuſpicion of any correſpondency with the Jews, to whom we are as much ſtrangers in our manners, as in our extraction.

And we do farther pray, that the temple which hath ſtood hitherto without any dedication, may from this time forward be called the temple of Jupiter of Greece, to the end, that when we ſhall live in more ſecurity and freedom, as to the government of our own private affairs, we may the better attend thoſe duties in the advancement of your ſervice and revenue.

In answer to this request of the Samaritans, the king wrote back as followeth.

KING ANTIOCHUS TO NICANOR.

HAVING received a petition from the Sidonians at Sichem, which we have here annexed to this letter; this is to let you underſtand, that it appeareth unto us, upon the information of the bearers thereof, that the Sidonians are no way guilty of the crimes charged upon the Jews; but on the contrary, that they govern themſelves according to the way and faſhion of the Greeks.

Wherefore it is our will and pleaſure that they receive no further trouble about the matter. And to what concerns the temple, it is our will alſo, that from this time forward it may be known and diſtinguiſhed by the name of Jupiter of Greece. We have written to the ſame effect alſo to our governor Appollonius. Dated in the forty-ſixth year, and the eleventh day of the month.

There lived at this time in Modim, a village in Judea, one *Matthias* a priest of the family of Joarib, and a native of Jerusalem. This person, being of a pious disposition, would frequently condole, with his sons, on account of the deplorable tate of the Jewish nation, their city being laid desolate, their temple pillaged and prophaned, with many other calamities. He would observe, how much more glorious it would be to fall a sacrifice to the laws and religion of their country, than to linger out a miserable life in this servile manner.

When the king's officers entered the village, to enforce the execution of their master's orders, they began to tamper with Matthias, as a person of authority, and one who might be a leading example to all the rest.

They laid before him the danger of disobeying, with the advantages and rewards he should receive upon his compliance. And upon these terms charged him, in the king's name, to worship as he was commanded, which he not only refused to do, but told them positively, *That if every ſoul within their maſter's dominions ſhould yield to him in that particular, he would never ſubmit himſelf, or adviſe any of his ſons to abandon the religion of their country.*

Matthias stopped here; and after a short silence, a Jew came forth from the multitude to sacrifice according to the method prescribed by the officers;

ficers; but Matthias and his sons were so inflamed at the indignity of this affront, that in a fury they not only killed the Jew, but the king's officer *Apelles*, with all his guard, as they were forcing the people to that abominable worship.

In the violence of their resentment, they overturned the altar also; Matthias calling out with a loud voice to the people about him, *As many of you as have a zealous regard for the purity of your religion, follow me.*

The father and the sons then withdrew themselves into the wilderness, leaving their goods and effects behind them.

They were soon followed by a number of families into the desert, where they lived for some time in caves.

When this came to the ears of the king's general officers, they drew the garrison out of the castle at Jerusalem, and marched after the Jews into the wilderness. Upon coming up to them, they endeavoured to bring them over, by fair words, advising them to bethink themselves, and to take more prudent measures, without forcing the soldiers upon the necessity of a military execution. But this was to no purpose; so that when they found all efforts ineffectual, they pitched upon the sabbath day for an attack upon them, burning and destroying them in their places of retirement, without any resistance, or so much as stopping the mouths of their caves; for such was the reverence they had for the observation of that day, and the laws that commanded them to keep it holy, that they chose rather to perish, than profane it.

There were near a thousand of them, men, women and children, who were thus suffocated underground; but there were also great numbers that escaped, and listed themselves under the command of Matthias.

Matthias finding the dire effects of this inactivity, represented to them the legality of defending themselves, when their lives were in danger, on the sabbath, as well as upon any other day; otherwise that scruple would be their total desruction; for their enemies taking advantage of that superstition, would be sure to attack them at a time when they were certain they should meet with no resistance.

The propriety of this remark was so evident, that they were all convinced of the lawfulness of using their arms on the sabbath, in case of necessity; and the practice of it continued ever since.

The great general was by this time master of a considerable force, insomuch that he destroyed their altars, and put all apostates to the sword, appointing children to be circumcised, which was before forbidden; and expelling the king's officers that were appointed to hinder it; having drawn into a body all that had dispersed themselves up and down into hiding-places for fear of the enemy.

Matthias having now been a full year in this command, felt himself seized with certain symptoms of death; and calling his sons about him,

him, spoke to them to this purpose:

My dear ſons, my life is drawing to an end; but I am now to charge you upon my bleſſing, before I leave you, that you ſtand firm to the cauſe that your father has aſſerted before you without the leaſt deviation.

Remember what I have told you; and do as I have adviſed you. Do your utmoſt to ſupport the rights and laws of your country, and to reſtore the order of a nation that is almoſt devoured by its own corruptions and idolatries; ſhun all communication with thoſe that either for fear, or for intereſt, have betrayed it.

Shew yourſelves ſons worthy of ſuch a father; and in defiance of all oppoſition, in defence of your country; eſteeming this the only way to preſerve you in God's favour. And that in conſideration of ſo unſhaken a virtue, He will, in time, reſtore you to your former life and manners.

Our bodies, it is true, are mortal, but great and general actions will make our memories immortal, and that is the glory to which I would have you aſpire.

Be ſure, to agree among yourſelves, and in what degree ſoever any of you hath an advantage over the reſt, reſign to him the buſineſs of his province.

As for example. It being Simon's faculty to form a right judgment of things, I ſhall adviſe you to pay the ſame regard to his councils as thoſe of a father. Maccabeus excells in military conduct and bravery; wherefore chuſe him for your general, as the beſt qualified for the vindication of your friends, and for the cruſhing of your enemies.

CHAP. V.

JUDAS SUCCEEDS MATTHIAS IN THE COMMAND OF THE JEWISH ARMY. DEFEATS THE GOVERNORS OF SAMARIA; GOES TO JERUSALEM. SUCCESS OF JUDAS MACCABEUS. PURIFIES THE TEMPLE, AND REGULATES THE CONFUSED STATE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN. PERFORMS MANY GALLANT EXPLOITS IN CONJUNCTION WITH SIMON. TRANSPORTATION OF THE JEWS OUT OF GALLILEE INTO JUDEA. DESTRUCTION OF EPHRON. JOSEPH AND AZARIAS IN FIGHTING CONTRARY TO ORDER, ARE DEFEATED.

MATTHIAS concluded his diſcourse to his ſons with prayers to God for a bleſſing upon their endeavours, towards the redemption of their countrymen and the recovery of their antient rights and privileges.

Soon after this he expired, and was buried at Modim. After his funeral obſequies were ſolemnized, Judas, otherwiſe Maccabeus, had the public adminiſtration put into his hands, which was in the year one hundred and forty-ſix, reckoning from Seleucus the firſt; and he was ſo well ſupported by his brothers, that he cleared the country of the enemy, and purged the land from all the abominable pollutions that had been practiſed therein.

The news of this turn of affairs upon

upon the succession of Judas, induced Appollonius, the governor of Samaria, to advance with his army against Judas; who, without loss of time, met him half way, fought and routed him, killed a great number of his people upon the spot, together with Appollonius himself, disarming him with his own hand, and carrying off his sword in triumph. He also spoiled the camp, and carried off a booty of prodigious value.

The tidings of this defeat, and of the vast reinforcements that came thronging in to Judas upon this success, gave Seron, the governor of Celo-Syria to understand, that it was necessary to be upon his guard, so that he took a resolution immediately to come to a battle, esteeming himself bound to chastise mutineers, and bring rebels to obedience.

In order to this expedition, with what men he had of his own, and with the additional force of a rabble of fugitive Jews, he took his march to Bethoron, a village of Judea, where he pitched his camp. Upon which Judas put himself in a posture to encounter him; but finding his soldiers indisposed for action, whether it was for fear of their mighty army, or for faitness upon over fasting, he made them a short harangue, that animated them with fresh courage and resolution, in the following words:

Fellow Soldiers, It is not the arm of flesh, but GOD, that gives the victory; not multitudes of men, but trust and confidence in the Almighty.

This is no more than we have found many times experimentally true in the history of our ancestors; who, with an inconsiderable number of men, in a righteous cause, that is, in defence of their religion, laws, liberties, wives and children, have put many thousands to flight.

Great is truth, in short, and the force of innocence is invincible.

With these spirited words, he led his men on to the battle, where they behaved themselves like heroes; engaged Seron, killed him upon the spot, and defeated the whole army of the Assyrians. For upon the fall of their general, their troops were presently broken and scattered, and every man's business was to secure his own flight.

Judas pursued them as far as the plain; about eight hundred of them were slain in the field of battle, and the rest made their escape toward the sea-side.

These disasters immediately succeeding each other, compelled Antiochus to raise a considerable army for the next campaign, which he effected, by means of his own people, and the addition of foreign mercenaries, determined to enter Judea early the following spring.

But these troubles had so interrupted the raising of his taxes, besides the frankness and generosity of his own nature, that upon the payment of his troops, he found money fall short, and that his revenue would not answer the charge of the war.

Upon this consideration, he proposed rather to go into Persia first, and

and to supply himself with what money he could raise in that province, leaving the command of all the country, between Egypt and Euphrates, during his absence, in the hands of one Lysias, a person of approved integrity, together with some part also of his troops and elephants; giving him further in charge, to take particular care of his son Antiochus, till he should come back again.

And moreover, that upon the reducing of Judea, and the selling of all the inhabitants for slaves, he would utterly destroy the city, and extirpate the nation.

Having given these orders, he marched for Persia, and passing the Euphrates, advanced forward into the higher countries.

Lysias took to his assistance, in the execution of this commission, Ptolemy the son of Dorymenes, Gorgius and Nicanor, three of the best officers he could find among the king's friends. He put these commanders at the head of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, with orders to march forthwith into Judea.

They advanced as far as Emmaus, and there encamped upon the plain, where there came over to them a great number of auxiliaries from Syria and other neighbouring countries, and an abundance of fugitive Jews; besides several merchants and traders, with great sums of money to buy slaves; these brought fetters and manacles with them of all sorts to secure their captives.

The enemy had raised a formidable army; but Judas told his people to cast themselves upon the protection of the Almighty, and fear nothing. And they humbled themselves in sackcloth, fasting and prayer, according to the custom of the country when in imminent danger, imploring God's mercy, favour and protection.

The general's next business was to range his men by regiments, troops and companies, into order of battle, according to the Jewish custom; and then to discharge the army of all new married men, and such as had lately made purchases, who probably might be diverted from their duty, between the care of their particular interest, and the service of the public; and animating his people also at the same time, by his words, as well as his actions, to acquit themselves like men of honour and courage.

We shall never (says he,) *my fellow soldiers and companions, have such an opportunity again of shewing our bravery in the defence of our country, and the contempt of all danger, as we have now before us; for upon the issue of to-morrow's combat, depends not only our liberty, but all the comforts and advantages that attend it; and over and above the blessing of such a freedom in itself, and in its own nature, our very religion lies at stake with it too, and we cannot secure the one, but by preserving the other.*

Remember, therefore, what it is that you are to contend for, and you shall find it to be no less than the sum and substance of the greatest happiness that ever you enjoyed; that is, the peaceable possession of your ancient

laws, rites, and discipline. Now whether will you rather chuse to perish with infamy, and involve the miserable remainder of all your countrymen in the same ruin, or venture one generous effort for the redemption of yourselves, and your friends is the point before you.

Death is the same thing to a coward, that it is to a valiant man, and as certain to the one as to the other; but there's a great difference in point of honour, between a gallant man that falls in the vindication of his religion, liberties, laws, and country, and a timid wretch that abandons all for fear of losing a life which he cannot save at last. Set these things before your mind, and rest assured that you have nothing to trust to but God's Providence, and your own concurring resolutions; and at the worst, while we contend for victory, we can never fail of glory.

After this speech of Judas to his soldiers, while his thoughts were intent upon the success of the approaching battle, he received certain intelligence, that Gorgias would be with him that night with a thousand horse, and five thousand foot, with some renegado Jews for their guide, to surprize him, and beat up his quarters. This discovery put Judas upon a design of surprizing him; taking the opportunity of his army being so divided. In order to this he caused several fires to be made in his camp, and so marched all night towards Emmaus, where the enemy lay encamped.

Gorgias, in the mean time, finding the Jews camp deserted; and presuming that they were ran away through fear, to hide themselves in the mountains, determined to find them out. But Judas coming by break of day to the enemy's camp, with only three thousand men, and those badly armed; and finding the enemy well armed, and their camp in very good order, he told his people for their encouragement, that they should not fear to attack them, even if they were all naked, so long as they were certain of God's favour and protection, which would support them against all other difficulties. With these words, he ordered the charge to be sounded; and breaking in upon them at the same instant, put them into such a consternation, that after putting those to the sword that resisted, the rest betook themselves to flight, and he pursued them as far as Gadara, and thence to the plains of Idumea, Azotus, and Jamnia. The number of the slain was about three thousand: but Judas would not suffer his people to plunder, because the troops of Gorgias were as yet entire; but upon the routing of him, he said, that they might take possession of the booty at pleasure.

While he was delivering these words, Gorgias's people discovering from an eminence at hand, the dead bodies of their friends; the havock that had been made in their tents, and their camp covered with smoke, they took it for granted that Judas's men were still embodied, and in condition to attack them; so that they fled, and dispersed themselves; every man consulting his own safety. The victory being thus gained without striking

striking a blow, Judas permitted his men at pleasure to take the pillage off the field, where they found gold and silver, costly habits of purple and scarlet, and other rich booty in abundance; which they carried off in triumph, singing as they marched, and giving thanks to God, the author of that victory, which proved both an earnest and a foundation of their future freedom.

Lysias was so sensible of the shame and of this defeat, that to redeem his credit, he brought into the field, the year following, an army of sixty thousand foot, and five thousand horse; all men of approved valour, and with this body entered Judea, by the way of the mountains, encamping at a place called Bethsura.

Judas was not at all dicouraged at his superiority of number, but marched directly towards him with an army of ten thousand men only. His trust was in God alone; so after a short and fervent prayer for a blessing upon his arms, he charged the enemy with such intrepidity, that upon the first shock he forced the line, and killed above five thousand men upon the spot.

This unexpected disaster, put their whole army into such confusion that Lysias finding them obstinately determined either to live or die in the possession of their liberty, thought proper to withdraw his troops before the consternation became too general; so that he returned to Antioch, where he posted himself by the help of mercenaries, and other additional reinforcements, in the most convenient situation for another attack.

Judas was so flushed with these repeated successes against the forces of Antioch, that he prevailed upon the Jews, in confidence that after so many victories obtained, God would not forsake them, to march without any more delay, to Jerusalem itself, and there to purge the temple, and offer up their daily sacrifice. But when they came thither, and found the temple abandoned, the gates all burnt, and the courts over-ran with weeds, Judas, and his people could not refrain from tears.

The two great works that he first entered upon, were the assault of the citadel, and the cleansing of the temple. The former he committed to his officers and soldiers, and reserved the care of the other to himself. As soon as he had gone through with the purging of it in form, he provided new vessels and utensils; a candlestick, a table, and an altar of incense, all of pure gold, put up new veils and hangings upon the walls, and before the passages of the doors; and in the next place supplied the doors themselves. The altar that had been prophaned with idolatrous sacrifices, and burnt offerings, was demolished, and removed; and another of unhewn stone erected in it's place.

Upon the twenty-fifth day of the month Casleu, which the Macedonians call Apellæus, they set lighted tapers in the candlesticks; offered incense upon the altar, and laid the shew-bread upon the table, and presented their oblations of burnt-offerings. This fell out precisely upon the same day, three years, from

from the prophanation of the temple and religion by Antiochus; the temple having now been full three years deserted.

This happened in the year one hundred forty-five; the twenty-fourth day of the month Appellæus, and the hundred and fifty-third Olympiad; which solemnity of purification was repeated also on the anniversary day of the year one hundred forty-eight; Olympiad one hundred forty and four as the prophet Daniel had expressly foretold, four hundred and eight years before the dissolution by the Macedonians came to pass.

The celebration of this festivity was continued by Judas for eight days, with solemn sacrifices and rejoicing; as well as all the innocent tokens of mirth and festivity, such as acclamation, praise, and thanksgiving. The people were so transported at the unexpected blessing of finding themselves restored to the religion and laws of their forefathers, that they appointed an anniversary of eight days solemnity to be strictly observed by their posterity for ever. Judas in the mean time rebuilt the walls of the city, and fortified them with strong towers to keep off an enemy; settling a garrison in Bethsura, and putting the place into a posture of defence.

The neighbouring nations were so irritated, at the growing power of the Jews, that they set their instruments at work by fraud and treachery to circumvent them, destroying them by stratagem: Judas, in the mean time, using the best means he could, either to prevent, or to disappoint their incursion. He fell at this time upon *Acrabatan*, where he killed great numbers of the Edomites, the posterity of Esau, making himself master also of a great booty.

He blocked up the sons of *Bann* likewise in the strong places they were possessed of, and where they laid in wait to make sallies upon the Jews, taking the places by assault: killing the defendants, and laying the forts in ashes.

After the subduing of these people, he carried his arms against the Ammonites, who had at that time a numerous army under the command of Timotheus. He fought with these and overcame them, and took the city of Jazar; carried away the people's wives and children, captives; and after the pillaging of the city, set it on fire, and so returned home victorious.

He was no sooner gone, but the people of the adjacent countries taking advantage of his departure, and gathering together at *Galaad*, made an attempt upon the Jews that lay in that quarter. These being forced to take sanctuary in the fortress of Dathema gave information to Judas, that Timotheus had a design to attack them, and earnestly desired he would send them relief.

In the very instant that Judas was reading this account, several messengers arrived from Galilee, with remonstrances and complaints, that the people of Ptolemais, Tyre and Sidon, and other bordering nations, were all joined in a confederacy against them.

Judas determined on the relief of his

his friends and countrymen in both places, sent his brother Simon with three thousand choice men to the succour of the Jews at Galilee; and with eight thousand more marched with his other brother Jonathan, to Galaad, leaving the rest of the army under the command of Joseph, the son of Zacharias and Azarias, as his lieutenant general, for the guard of Jerusalem, with orders to avoid coming to action till his return.

Simon, upon his arrival at Galilee, engaged the enemy, and defeated them, pursuing them to the very gates of Ptolemais, and killing about three thousand in the flight, they stripped them of what they had, and redeemed the prisoners with the goods they had taken from them, and then conducted them back to Jerusalem.

At the same time Judas and his brother Jonathan, after three days march beyond Jordan in the wilderness, were hospitably entertained by the Nibathites, who very kindly gave them intelligence of the extreme distress and dangers of divers of their friends and countrymen, who were close shut up in the towns and castles of Galaad; advising them with all imaginable expedition, to hasten by way of the desart to their relief.

In this expedition, they took the town of *Baraſa* by the way, putting all the people to the sword that were able to bear arms, and burning the city to the ground.

Though it was now almost night, Judas prosecuted his way to a castle where he understood the Jews were besieged; came there betime in the morning, and found the enemy playing their machines and scaling ladders to force the place; whereupon he arranged his troops in three divisions; animated his men to behave themselves resolutely for the relief of their countrymen and friends, and upon the sound of the trumpet, charged the enemy in the rear.

As soon as Timotheus understood that Judas Maccabeus had the command of this action, a person whose valour and conduct he knew by woeful experience, his men were so dismayed at the very name, that they immediately fled. Eight thousand of them fell upon the spot, and the Jews closely pursued them.

In the pursuit, Judas took a town of the Barbarians, called Mallum, where, having put all the males to death, they destroyed the city by fire.

They did the same thing also at Casphan and Bosor, and other places that they took in that country.

Soon after this, Timotheus raised a very considerable army, and, among other auxiliaries, he had a band of Arabians. They crossed the river, and encamped near Raphen, where he encouraged his people to acquit themselves like men and be sure to keep the Jews from passing the river, observing to them, that the whole cause depended upon it; and that if ever they gained that pass, they would most certainly carry the day.

When Judas understood what Timotheus was resolved upon, and prepared for a battle, he passed the river immediately with his army, gave the onset, and put the army to the

rout upon the first encounter: killing those that resisted, and putting the rest to flight. These casting away their arms, dispersed; part of them betook themselves for sanctuary to the temple of Carnaim, in hope that the place might protect them. But Judas took the town by force, burnt the temple, and destroyed all the inhabitants by fire and sword.

This difficulty being surmounted, he gathered together all the Israelites that were in the countries of Galaad, with their wives, children, and goods, and carried them all into Judea.

The city of Ephron laying so directly in his way, he sent a message to the inhabitants for leave to pass with his army through the town; but the ports being barricaded, and the avenues cut off, the inhabitants in plain terms denied him a passage.

Upon this repulse, he encouraged his men to attack the town; they surrounded it immediately, and in one day and night, he made himself master of it, laid it in ashes, and marched with his army over the bodies of the dead, through the ruins, putting all the males that were found in it to the sword.

After passing over the river Jordan, they advanced to a great plain near Bethsan, called by the Greeks Seythepolis, and from thence returned to Judea, the people rejoicing as they passed along, with hymns and triumphal songs, and offering sacrifices of thanksgiving for the safety of the army; for they had not yet lost so much as one Jew in these engagements.

Joseph the son of Zacharias together with Azarias, two great captains, being left for a guard to Judea, in the absence of Simon, who had marched into Galilee agains the people of Ptolemais, and Judas, with his brother Jonathan against the Galaadites, thought it incumbent on them to signalize themselves by some glorious enterprize as well as their brethren.

With this spirit of emulation they advanced to Jamnia, where Gorpias, the governor of the place, gave them battle before the town, killed about two thousand of them, and pursued the rest to the very borders of Judea.

This calamity deservedly befel them, for not obeying the orders of their general, who had positively commanded them not to engage the enemy upon any terms, till his return. Such a caution redounded much to the reputation of Judas, who was well assured, that if they departed from their instructions, they would suffer for it.

But Judas and his brethren carried on the war, in the mean time, with the utmost vigour, against the Edomites, subduing them on all hands.

They took Hebron by force, demolished the fortifications, and burnt the towers and castles to the ground, laid their enemy's country waste, demolished Marissa, and from thence over-ran and pillaged Azotus.

Having performed these exploits, and enriched themselves with a considerable booty, they returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE AMBITION AND AVARICE OF ANTIOCHUS RETALIATED IN HIS OWN DISGRACE. HE DIES: AND APPOINTS PHILIP TO THE REGENCY, DURING THE MINORITY OF HIS SON. THE YOUNG PRINCE IS DECLARED KING. THE JEWS ARE HARRASSED BY THE MACEDONIANS. ELEAZAR IS SLAIN. DEATH OF ONIAS. ANTIOCHUS AND LYSIAS PUT TO DEATH. RAVAGES AND DEPREDATIONS OF ALCIMUS.

AS Antiochus Epiphanes was about this progress through some of his highland provinces, he was told of a certain rich city in Persia, called Elymais, and of a most magnificent temple in it, dedicated to *Diana*, in which were deposited precious gifts of all sorts, with the very shield and breast-plate of *Alexander*, the son of *Philip* of Macedon.

Antiochus was so attracted by these splendid curiosities, that he advanced toward it with his army to take it by assault; but the inhabitants, without any regard either to his power, or his design, made a brave resistance, and disappointed his expectation; nor did they content themselves with beating him from the walls, but followed him so close up on his retreat, that they cut off great part of his rear, and drove him before them like a fugitive for protection into Babylon.

While he lay under this disgrace, news came of the defeat of his other troops, to whom he had committed the care and conduct of the war, against the Jews, and of the daily increase of their number and power; so that greatly oppressed with grief and concern for his various losses and disappointments, he fell sick, and finding his dissolution approach, he called his friends about him, and told them both the cause and nature of his distemper.

I am, said he, *justly punished for the sake of these miserable Jews, for the sacrilegious rifling and prophaning of their temple, and for the contempt of the heavenly God.*

When he had said these words, he expired.

When Antiochus found himself near his end, he sent for Philip, as the most trusty of his friends, and committed the regency of his kingdom into his hands, delivering up to him at the same time the crown, the royal robes, and signet, with orders to preserve them for his son Antiochus, who was then in his minority, strictly enjoining him to take care of his education, and secure the crown to him, when he should be capable of the administration.

The death of this prince was no sooner made known to the people, than Lysias declared Antiochus king, under the name of *Eupator*, having at that time the tuition of the young prince.

The Macedonians, in the mean time, who were then garrisoned in the citadel of Jerusalem, together with some Jewish revolters, made several sallies upon the Jews, as they went to worship in the temple; so Judas found it absolutely necessary to reduce

reduce that fort for the common security of the nation.

It was now just a hundred and fifty years that this government had been in the family of Seleucus. Judas was so determined on the accomplishment of his design, that he set to framing of machines and engines for battery, and the casting up of works.

While this was in agitation, several deserters escaped by night, and joining with others, went to Antiochus, setting forth the miserable condition to which they were reduced by their own tribe, for their obedience to the king's command, in opposition to their own law, and that they were then in imminent danger of falling in the hands of Judas, without immediate relief.

The young prince gave orders to his friends and commanders to levy what auxiliaries were to be had for money, over and above the greatest number of choice men that they could raise from among his own subjects.

His orders were executed with such diligence, that in a short time they mustered a hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horses, and two and thirty elephants. With this formidable army, under the command of Lysias, the king marched out of Antioch, advanced to Idumea, and from thence proceeded to Bethsura, a place well fortified, and spent much time before it; for between sallies and stratagems, the besieged found means to defeat all the attempts of the enemy.

Judas being informed of the approach of Antiochus, raised the siege, and marched to meet the enemy, pitched his tent upon the very entrance into the streights of Bethzacharias, about seventy furlongs from the adversary.

Antiochus upon this quitted the Bethsurites, and encamped within distance of engaging Judas, appointing his army, by break of day, to put themselves upon their march in order of battle. But the place being too narrow for the elephants to march in front, they were forced into a defile, with a thousand foot, and five hundred horse, upon the guard of every elephant, and so to advance one after another with a kind of tower or castle upon their backs, charged with archers, while the rest of the troops mounted the hills on both sides, under the command of able and trusty officers.

From this ascent they gave the attack, with so horrid a shout that the vallies resounded with the echo; so that the hideous outcry, and the flashes of their gold and brazen bucklers, exhibited a scene of astonishment and surprise.

But all this was to Judas no more than empty pomp and noise; for he received them so bravely, that he killed near six hundred upon the first encounter.

While they were thus engaged, Eleazer, otherwise called Savaran, the brother of Judas, taking notice of one elephant that was caparisoned with richer trappings than the rest, he made his way with a generous resolution through all the guards to that beast, taking for granted, that the king was upon her.

When

When he had cut part of his opposers to pieces on each hand, and forced the rest to clear his passage, he crept under the belly of the elephant, and wounded him to death; himself also perished under the weight of the beast upon his fall. He had the honour however to die in the attempt of a glorious action, and encompassed with the dead bodies of his enemies.

Judas finding himself so mightily exceeded in number, drew off to the siege of the fortress at Jerusalem again, when Antiochus sent one part of his army to sit down before Bethsura, and with the remainder of it went to Jerusalem.

The Bethsurites were so discouraged by the appearance of the king's troops, and so much more disheartened by their want of provisions, that they found themselves under a necessity of delivering up the place, which they did, upon conditions, with solemn articles, that there should be no violence or molestation offered them whatever.

But the king kept his faith no farther than the bare saving of their lives; for the inhabitants were all turned naked out of the town, and a garrison of his own fixed in their place. But the siege of the temple cost them much pains, through the resolute defence that was made, as all the attacks by their machines were eluded by counter-workings and designs.

Their only distress was want of bread; for having already spent their last year's store, and this happening to fall out upon the seventh year, when by the Jewish law they could neither plow nor sow, great numbers of the Jews deserted the town merely for want of provision, insomuch that there was scarcely numbers sufficient to defend the place.

The king and his general Lysias received intelligence, that Philip had usurped the government, and was marching toward them at the head of an army out of Persia; so that they came to a secret resolution to quit the siege, seek him out and give him battle; but to execute their design with such privacy, that neither officer nor soldier should so much as divine the intent. Wherefore the king ordered Lysias, without mentioning the name of Philip, to enter into a discourse with the commanders and soldiers concerning the siege, the strength of the place, the difficulty of the enterprize, and to observe to them upon the whole, that being reduced to a want of corn, and the king's business also requiring his presence elsewhere, they could not do better than to come to some sort of agreement with them, upon condition of allowing them the free exercise of their particular religion, laws, and customs; and this point being given up, which had been the only ground of their rebellions, the king might return when he pleased, without any farther trouble.

This Lysias had in charge to communicate to the army, and the soldiers were highly pleased with the proposal.

Matters being thus concerted, Antiochus dispatched a herald to Judas, and the besieged, with an offer of

peace, and a free enjoyment and exercise of their laws and customs, which they very readily agreed to, and the security of an oath for the performance of articles, delivered up the temple; but upon Antiochus's taking possession of it, he found the place so very strong, that without regard to his oath and promise, he ordered his soldiers to demolish the walls, and lay them level with the ground, which was executed accordingly, and so returned to Antioch, carrying the High-Priest Onias, alias Menelaus, along with him.

This was done upon the advice of Lysias, who told him, that if ever he would render the Jews quiet, or himself at ease, that man must be taken off; for it was at his instigation that his father forced the Jews to a religion against their laws and consciences: and that Onias was consequently the author and promoter of all the evils that had befallen him.

The king upon this sent away Menelaus to Berrhea in Syria, where he caused him to be put to death, after ten years enjoyment of the pontificate. He was a very wicked man, who, to secure the dignity to himself, caused a general defection among the Jews, from the laws and worship of their country. His next successor was *Alcimus*, who was also called *Jacemus*.

When Antiochus found that Philip had now usurped the government, he fought with him, and overcame him; took him prisoner, and ordered him to be put to death. But the son of the High-Priest Onias being left an infant, by the death of Menelaus, finding that the king had conferred the dignity on *Alcimus*, who stood in no relation to the sacerdotal family, and was only over-ruled by Lysias in the transfering of it, fled into Egypt, where he was so graciously received, both by Ptolomy, and his queen Cleopatra, that at his request, they bestowed a place of trust upon him in Heliopolis, where he erected a temple after the model of that at Jerusalem.

Demetrius the son of Seleucus having fled away from Rome, took possession of Tripolis in Syria; and with as many mercenaries as he could get together, invaded the country, where the people did not only come over to him in great numbers, with open arms to receive him; but as a farther instance of an affection to his interest, seized upon the persons of Antiochus and Lysias, and brought them in custody to him.

Upon this they were immediately both put to death by the command of Demetrius; Antiochus having now reigned two years. He had in his party a great number of profligate Jews, that had been banished for notorious crimes, together with Alcimus the High-Priest, who all joined in one common accusation and complaint against the whole people of the Jews, but especially Judas Maccabeus and his brethren, whom they charged, not only with the destruction of as many of the king's friends as fell into their hands, but with the very ejection of themselves out of the land too. Wherefore they made it their request to Demetrius, only to send some

some particular person that he could confide in to examine matters in Judea, and to see what havock Judas had made there.

Demetrius in a rage dispatched upon this errand Bacchides, formerly a friend to Antiochus Epiphanes; who being a resolute man, and at that time governor of Mesopotamia, dispatched Alcimus with a commission to fall upon Judas and his followers. With these troops Bacchides left Antioch, and marched directly into Judea, where he gave Judas and his brethren a solemn invitation to come to a better understanding with him.

Now the only design was under the colour of a peaceable and friendly disposition, to draw them in and surprise them. But as he came at the head of an army, and in the posture of an enemy rather than a friend, Judas kept himself upon his guard, without giving any credit to his pretensions; though some credulous people went over to them, in confidence that their countrymen and their tribesman Alcimus would do them no injury; especially as they had taken a solem oath, that no violence should be offered, either to themselves, or any of their party. This confidence, however, deceived them; for Bacchides, without any regard to conscience, caused sixty of them to be cut to pieces on the place: which barbarous perfidy served for a warning to the rest not to approach him.

Bacchides, after this, removed his army from Jerusalem and went to Bethzeth, where he found several deserters, and other disaffected people, whom he put to the sword. This being done, he commanded all the Jews in his absence to obey Alcimus; and leaving part of his army with him for the security of the province, returned with the rest to king Demetrius at Antioch.

Alcimus during all these transactions had an eye to the pontificate, and reflecting, that it was an honour hardly to be compassed but by the favour and good-will of the people, betook himself to the popular arts of courtesy and affability, to ingratiate himself with the multitude: so that by means of his obliging speech and behaviour, he quickly doubled the number of the forces that were left him; but it was with a band of impious fugitives who inlisted themselves in his service, with whom he ravaged the country, putting all the Jews to death wherever he came, that were friends to Maccabeus.

Judas, incensed at the depredations committed by a rabble army, headed by Alcimus, determined to retaliate on themselves the injuries they had offered, but sensible that he was not able to cope with them by himself, he applied to Demetrius at Antioch, for succour, where he did all that was possible, to irritate that prince against Alcimus, by resenting the indignities he had put upon him already, and the certainty of future insults, unless he sent a powerful army to call that bold and wicked man to an account for his misdemeanors.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

TREACHERY AND BLASPHEMY OF NICANOR PUNISHED. THE WICKEDNESS OF ALCIMUS RETALIATED BY A JUDICIAL VENGEANCE. JUDAS SUCCEEDS TO THE PONTIFICATE. ENTERS INTO AN ALLIANCE WITH THE ROMANS. NOBLY ESPOUSES THE CAUSE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN, AND IS SLAIN IN BATTLE.

JUDAS was now become so formidable, that Demetrius was very fearful of the consequences if he suffered him thus to increase in strength and credit; so that he called Nicanor to him, who had been formerly his companion in his departure from Rome, and his particular confident and friend; and asssigned him the command of such an army as he reckoned sufficient for the reducing of Judas, with positive orders to make war upon the whole nation, and give no quarter.

Upon his setting out for Jerusalem, he proposed to himself to dissemble his intentions, and try if he could inveigle Judas under a countenance of peaceable purposes, into a credulity that would certainly be his ruin. Nicanor thus suggested the matter to him by way of expostulation. *Why should we expose the sum of all our happiness to the uncertain chance of war, and not rather adjust the point in controversy by an amicable treaty? If you apprehend any danger in it, I am ready to give you the most sacred oath of security, that one man can give to another; for peace is all my business; as you may judge by the friends I have brought along with me, is to acquaint you with my master's will and pleasure, and of his sincere good-will to the whole nation of the Jews.*

This declaration wrought so far upon the brother, that without any suspicion of treason, they interchangably passed their oaths, and with great frankness received Nicanor with his whole army. After the first greeting between Judas and Nicanor, the latter gave a signal to his people to seize him, but the plot being discovered in time, he made his escape to his own people: and after the detecting of this treachery, both parties prepared to decide the quarrel by open force, without any farther mention of a treaty. The armies drew out, and came to a battle near Capharsalama, where Judas was defeated, and forced into the eastle of Jerusalem.

It happened one day, as Nicanor was passing by the temple, that several of the priests and elders met him, and shewed him the sacrifices that they were about to offer to God, for the prosperity and welfare of Demetrius.

Nicanor threatened them, and even uttered blasphemous revilings against God himself; declaring that if the people did not deliver up Judas to him, he would return to their sorrow and cost; destroy the temple, and leave it in ashes.

With these menaces he departed; but the priests were so dejected at this declaration, that they forthwith addressed themselves to God with prayers

prayers and tears, to protect his own house, and his ministers that belonged to it, against the outrages of the enemy.

Nicanor departed from Jerusalem, and pitched his tent in Bethoron, where he was joined by a great reinforcement out of Syria. Judas at the same time encamped at Adasi, within thirty furlongs of the enemy, and with a body only of a thousand men. He told them, that the enemy indeed was numerous, but that the cause was God's, whose power was above that of a multitude; exhorting them not to trouble themselves concerning the apparent superiority of the army they were to encounter, but to fall on like men of courage and resolution, and commit the issue to God.

In fine, it came to a battle; and the first encounter was very vigorous, but upon the fall of great numbers of the enemy, and of Nicanor too, who did all that could be done by a great commander, and a brave man, the whole army scattered; and upon the loss of their general, cast away their arms, in order to make them lighter for their flight. Judas in the mean time pursuing the fugitives without mercy, made proclamation, by sound of trumpet, through all the towns and cities where he passed, of the victory he had obtained.

Upon this signal, the country people gathered together, and fell so unmercifully upon the soldiers in their flight, that of nine thousand men, which was the precise number of their army, there was not a man that escaped.

The Jews, after this victory, had an interval of peace, but it lasted not long.

Alcimus was extremely desirous of having the old wall of the sanctuary pulled down, and the works of the antient prophets demolished; but in the very instant of his ordering it to be done, God struck him with so potent a disease, that he fell upon the ground speechless, where he languished in great torment, and then died, after being four years in the office of the pontificate. The people upon his decease unanimously chusing Judas as his successor.

The new High-Priest had heard so much of the fame and power of the Romans, and of the overthrows they had given the Gauls, Spaniards, Carthaginians, nay, to Greece itself, and king Perseus, Philip and Antiochus, that he had a mighty desire to enter into a league with them; accordingly he sent Eupolemus, the son of John, and Jason the son of Eleazar, two particular friends, to Rome upon an embassy, soliciting to be received into the number of their allies, and that they would write to Demetrius, to forbear making war with the Jews, on any pretence, for the future.

The senate was so well pleased with the proposal, that they consented to the league, and passed an order soon after in favour of it, which was written in tables of brass; the copy of it sent to Jerusalem, and the original deposited in the capital. The articles were to this effect:

That no people whatsoever, under the jurisdiction of the Romans, should presume

preſume to make war upon the Jews, or to aſſiſt any of their enemies with corn, ſhipping, money, or the like, and the ſame obligation to lie reciprocally upon the Jews, in caſe of any war made upon the Romans.

If there ſhould be any thing after this, which the Jews would have to be added, or taken away, that it be firſt ratified by the common conſent of the people.

This reſolution of the ſenate was written by Eupolemus, Jason, Judas, the High-Priest, and his brother Simon, general of the army. This was the first alliance that ever was made between the Jews and the Romans.

Upon the report of Nicanor's death, and the defeat of the army, Demetrius sent Bacchides a second time into Judea, who advanced, with fresh troops to Arbela, a town in Galilee, and there encamped, forcing a great many Jews out of the caves there, where they hid themselves.

From hence he hastened away to Jerusalem: and upon intelligence that Judas and his people were at Berezeth, posted immediately with twenty thousand foot, and two thousand horse, to encounter him, who had, at that time but a bare thousand men about him, and but eight hundred of them stood by him; for two hundred of them deserted him through fear of being over-powered.

In this want of men, and time for recruiting, Judas maintained his reſolution, in despite of all difficulties, of puttting it to the fate of a battle, only desiring his men to stand by him, and follow his example.

They represented to him, how vain and rash a thing it would be to contend with such insupportable odds, advising him rather to attempt an honourable retreat, by which means possibly he might reinforce himself.

But he declared, *That it ſhould never be ſaid, that the Sun ever ſaw Judas turn his back upon an enemy. If it ſhould be our lot now to die, God's will be done, provided that we do not blaſt the reputation of a glorious life with an ignominious death.*

With these words he roused the courage of his soldiers to his own pitch, and animated them for the combat.

Bacchides having ranged his army, placing the horse upon the two wings, whereof he himself commanded the right, his light armed men and archers in the front, supported by a Macedonian * phalanx in the body. In this order of battle, he advanced up to the enemy, sounded a charge, and with a military shout according to custom, gave the onset. Judas encountering him on the other hand after the same manner.

The engagement was maintained with great vigour on both sides, from morning till towards sun-set; when Judas taking notice of the danger his men were in of being over-powered by the enemy's right wing, where Bacchides, with the

* The Macedonian phalanx, was much the same as the Roman legion; namely a square body of men, consisting of about six or eight thousand foot.

flower

flower of the army fiercely assailed them, came in with a band of valiant and courageous youths to their relief; and breaking their line, pierced into the very body of them, routed, and gave them chase as far as mount Azotus.

The enemy's left wing upon this followed Judas so closely, that he was now beset on all hands, and out of all possibility of escaping: yet he and his people stood their ground, and bravely resolved to sell their lives as dear as possible; but after a great slaughter of their enemies, Judas and his companions were so wearied out, that they seemed at last to be rather spent than overcome. Nor did they fall unrevenged.

Thus did this glorious hero finish the character of a great man, by making his life and death correspond in point of true valour.

It could not be expected that the soldiers, after the loss of so brave a general, could dispute the point any further without a leader. So they presently dispersed, while the two brothers, Simeon and Jonathan, treated with the enemy for the body of their brother, which they carried away, and laid it at Modin in the sepulchre of his fathers, with all funeral magnificence, and with the solemnity of a public mourning for several days, in honour of his memory, according to the custom of the place upon so extraordinary an occasion.

Such was the end of Judas Maccabeus, a generous, and a valiant man, the true son of the virtue, as well as the blood of Matthias; for he never forgot the precepts of his dying father; who enjoined him upon his blessing, never to decline any labour or hazard for the liberty and welfare of his countrymen.

In pursuance of this charge, he acquired everlasting honour, by the rescue of his friends out of the hands of the Macedonians, and by his three years administration in the office of High-Priest.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK IX.

CHAP. I.

JUDAS IS SUCCEEDED BY JONATHAN, WHO MAINTAINS THE OPPOSITION AGAINST BACCHIDES, WITH VARIOUS SUCCESS, TILL THEY ENTER INTO AN ALLIANCE. JONATHAN FORMS A TREATY WITH DEMETRIUS. FORTIFIES JERUSALEM. IS SHEWN GREAT FAVOURS BY ALEXANDER BALAZ, WHO OPPOSES DEMETRIUS. DEATH OF THAT PRINCE.

IT has been already observed, that Judas, the mighty captain and valiant defender of the Jews, after several bloody battles fought in that righteous cause, lost his life in a magnanimous contest for their religion and laws.

This illustrious person was no sooner taken off, but the whole party of the profligate Jews, that, contrary to conscience, faith and honour, had abandoned the religion, laws and customs of the nation, resumed their former animosities, and persecuted their honest countrymen, more spitefully than ever.

There happened also at the same time a general famine, which doubled the other calamity; for between want of bread on the one hand, and want of power to defend themselves against their enemies on the other, the misery lay so heavy upon them, that a great many of the Jews found themselves under some necessity to comply with the faction of the Macedonians.

Upon this juncture, Bacchides convened all the apostate Jews that were gone over to strange gods, and committed the care of the government principally into their hands, who made it their business, in the first place, to seize all the friends and late partizans of Judas, and thereby deliver them to Bacchides, to torture them at pleasure, who in the end put every man to death.

The condition of the Jews was never more deplorable since their captivity in Babylon, as it was at this time; insomuch, that all those who had

had wished well to Judas, joined in a request to Jonathan, not only to follow his brother's example, who had so frankly sacrificed his blood for the liberties of his country, but to take upon himself his command also, the whole nation lying under such desperate circumstances, that they must be all inevitably lost without a leader.

His answer was, That he was ready to do or suffer any thing for the public good; whereupon, with the unanimous consent of the people, he was declared their general.

When Bacchides came to be informed of this choice, and to reflect, that Jonathan was likely to give as much trouble and disturbance to the king and Macedonians, as his brother Judas, he determined to take him off by treachery. But he and his brother Simon were both so well aware of such a design, that they provided for themselves betimes, by withdrawing into the neighbouring desert, with what strength they were able to get together, and pitched their tents by the pool of Asphar.

Bacchides looking upon this retreat into the wilderness, as the effect of fear, and no other than a direct flight from the face of an enemy, marched toward them with all his troops, and encamped beyond Jordan, making choice of that place for his rendezvous.

When Jonathan came to hear of this motion, he sent his brother to the Arabian Nabathites, being in friendship with them, for leave to deposit their baggage in their custody, till the battle with Bacchides should be decided.

But as he was upon the way, the sons of Amaraus made a sally out to Medaba upon the convoy; took all their carriages, and whatever else they had about them; killed John upon the spot, and all his company.

Bacchides having intelligence that Jonathan lay encamped in the Fenny grounds near the river Jordan, pitched upon the sabbath-day for the attack, in confidence of the superstitious reverence the Jews had for that festival. But Jonathan laying before his soldiers the absolute necessity of fighting; the enemy being before them, and the river behind them, there was no saving their lives without it; and considering the exigence of the case, they called upon God for victory, and in the same instant resolutely charged the enemy, killing great numbers of them upon the spot.

In the heat of this action, Bacchides pressed furiously upon the person of Jonathan, who at the same time made a blow at him: but the other evaded it, while he and his company took to the river, and the enemy not daring to follow them, got safe to the other side.

Bacchides, after this withdrew into the citadel of Jerusalem, with the loss of one thousand of his men, and fortified several strong cities and places that had been demolished before, as Jericho, Emmaus, Bethoron, Bethel, Thamnatha, Pharathoni, Taphon, and Gazara.

These places he strengthened with walls and towers, and with strong garrisons, to be ready for excursions to fall upon the Jews. But care was taken above all the rest, to make the citadel of Jerusalem impregnable; in which place the chief men's sons of the country were secured as hostages.

Intelligence arrived about this time, to the two other brothers, Jonathan and Simon, that there was a splendid wedding on treaty, between one of the sons of Amaraus, and the daughter of an illustrious Arabian; the sons of Amaraus were to be at the wedding, and the bride to be conducted in great pomp from the city of Gabatha.

The brothers embraced this opportunity to revenge themselves for the death of their brother, and hastened away towards Medaba, to trepan the people who were to assist at the wedding, into an ambush that they had planted in the mountains. Upon the arrival of the bridegroom with his bride, and a long train of their friends, the party salied out upon them, and cut them all off, without saving so much as one person, with their wives, children, and friends, to the number of four hundred; carrying off the booty entire, after which exploit they returned to their quarters at Jordan.

When Bacchides had settled garrisons in Judea, he returned to his master; and for about two years the Jews enjoyed some tranquility.

But the apostate Jews, envying the repose of Jonathan and his party, solicited Demetrius, by their proxies, that Bacchides might be ordered to reduce Jonathan, representing it as a thing so easily to be effected, that it required no more than one night's work to rid themselves both of him and all his soldiers by surprize.

The king immediately yielded to the proposition, and dispatched Bacchides away into Judea upon the commission, where he sent his letters to all the king's friends and officers, to give their assistance toward the seizing of Jonathan.

They joined in council to concert measures to ensnare him; and finding upon several trials that all proved ineffectual (for Jonathan was cautious) the Macedonian, in a transport of rage imputed the whole miscarriage to the treachery of the apostate Jews; who, he said, sported with the king's orders, and thereupon put fifty of their chief men to death.

Jonathan and his brother, finding themselves too weak for Bacchides, withdrew into the wilderness, to a village called Bethbasi, and fortified it, in order to serve them for a place of retreat.

Upon this intelligence, Bacchides marched against them with all the power he was able to raise. And he opened his trenches immediately against the place, and for some days carried on his approaches, Jonathan, on the other side, making a very obstinate resistance.

While affairs were thus circumstanced, he left the defence of the place to his brother, and with all the force he could draw together out of the neighbourhood, stole away by night,

night, fell upon Bacchides, in his quarters, killed a great number of his men, and a dreadful havock and confusion ensued. At this juncture, Simon hearing of his brother's slaughter, made a sally, burnt their machines, cut off a great number of their people, and afterwards returned.

Bacchides, was so alarmed at this assault upon his front and rear, and the miscarriage of an attempt he thought himself so sure of, that for some time it deprived him of his reason. But all the mischiefs of this micarriage were imputed to the Jewish impostors, who had prevailed with the king, to undertake this expedition. It remained now only to consider how the siege might be raised without loss of honour, both to the king and himself, and to draw off without disgrace.

While Bacchides was deliberating on these affairs, Jonathan embraced this opportunity of accomplishing his design so essential to the true interest of the Jews.

With this view he sent him an honourable embassy, with proposals of a mutual league and friendship, on condition of releasing the prisoners on both sides.

This was a motion so reasonable in itself, and opportune for quitting the siege without loss of reputation, he immediately entered into an alliance with Jonathan; with a mutual exchange of oaths, to deliver up, and restore all prisoners on both sides, and not to commit any act of hostility one to another.

The treaty being ratified, Bacchides returned to the king at Antioch, without coming back with his army to Judea.

Jonathan being now settled in a state of peace and safety, took up his abode in Machmas, where he applied himself to the administration of law and justice.

He was a bitter enemy to deserters, a zealous asserter of the laws, and purged the land from all foreign abominations.

In the year one hundred and sixty, Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, seized Ptolemais in Syria, through the confederacy of the soldiers, whose aversion he had excited by a proud, arrogant behaviour, as well as a peculiar indolence of disposition, which caused him to neglect the affairs of state, and devote himself intirely to ease and indulgence.

But the news of Alexander's fate, roused him from his lethargy, and prompted him with all expedition to gather his forces, and march against him.

Demetrius, thus embarrassed, sent an embassy to Jonathan, with proposals of an alliance; this he did in order to anticipate any treaty that he might enter into with Alexander, which would redound to his disadvantage.

The purport of this message was, an authority to levy men, to provide arms, and to set the hostages at liberty, that Bacchides had committed prisoners to the castle.

Upon the receipt of this letter from Demetrius, Jonathan went to Jerusalem, where he read it publicly, in

in the hearing of the garrison, and of the people. The fugitives in the citadel were very much surprized to see Jonathan on a sudden, so much in favour with Demetrius.

He went on however with his levies, set the hostages at liberty, and remanded them safe back to their parents. He made Jerusalem, for the present the place of his residence; where he fortified, altered, and repaired at pleasure; rebuilding and strengthening the walls, with large square stones for the better defence of the place.

The Macedonians that were dispersed up and down in several garrisons, quitted their stations upon this change at Jerusalem, and went away to Antioch. But as for those that were in Bethsura, and at the tower in Jerusalem, the major part of them being Jewish deserters, it was not safe for them to stir out of their holds and lurking places.

Alexander was no stranger to the character of Jonathan, and particularly to his military exploits against the Macedonians, nor the indignities that they had put upon him, both by Demetrius and Bacchides; so that being told of the fair promises of Demetrius, he laid the matter before his friends, who gave it as their opinion, that the best measures he could pursue at that time, was to enter into an alliance with Jonathan; a person of an eminent valour, and a mortal enemy to Demetrius, for divers causes. Upon this a resolution was formed, with the advice of council, for an application to Jonathan, which was concluded in the following terms:

KING ALEXANDER TO HIS BROTHER JONATHAN, SENDETH, GREETING.

WHEREAS we have been long since given to understand, that thou art a man of honour, faith, and courage, and in every respect worthy of our friendship, we have now sent our ambassadors to make thee a tender of our amity and alliance, and to treat in our name about it.

We do by these presents, and by our royal authority, ordain and pronounce thee to be the High-Priest of the Jews, and adopt thee into the roll of the king's friends; sending thee for a present likewise, a purple robe, and a crown of gold, not doubting but that our affection and esteem will be answered on that part with a suitable return.

Jonathan, upon the arrival of this message, put on his sacerdotal robes, it being the day of the feast of tabernacles. This was four years after the death of his brother Judas, the pontificial seat having been so long vacant, and from thence forward he applied himself to the improvement of his military power.

Demetrius was by this time sensible of the error of his delay, in neglecting the opportunity of being before-hand with his competitor for an alliance with Jonathan.

However, the anticipation of Alexander did not yet hinder him from carrying

carrying it as far as it would go, in the following letter:

KING DEMETRIUS TO JONATHAN, AND TO THE PEOPLE OF THE JEWS, GREETING

WHEREAS we have hitherto always found you true and faithful to your duty, and to our service, in despite of all the arts and practices of our enemies to seduce you from your allegiance, we cannot but give you some instance of the esteem we have for your unshaken fidelity in times past, and likewise of our ardent desire to give you all encouragement to preserve in the same, for the time to come.

It is our pleasure therefore to remit the greatest part of your tributes. And by these present to ease you of all the taxes that you formerly paid to our predecessors, or to ourselves, over and above the custom of salt, and crown taxes. The thirds of your corn, and of your fruits, we do discharge you of for ever; together with the poll-tax upon the inhabitants of Judea, and the three governments of Samaria, Galilee, and Peræa.

We will, that the city of Jerusalem, be accounted holy, and have the privileges of a sanctuary, or city of refuge, with an exemption both to itself and its dependencies, from all tenths and tributes. The citadel shall be delivered up to the High-Priest Jonathan, with liberty to put into it for a garrison, such of his friends and confidents as he shall make choice of.

It is our further pleasure, that every Jew, who was carried away prisoner into any part of our dominions, be forthwith set at liberty, without imposing any hardships, after this decree, so much as upon their cattle, either by press-masters, or otherwise. That all their sabbaths and solemn festivals, and three days before them, shall be days of immunity and freedom to every Jew in our dominion, that they may live quietly without any sort of molestation. And for so many of the Jews, within the compass of thirty thousand men, as may desire to bear arms in our service, they shall be entertained at the same rate with our own guards, and instructed also in our garrisons, and about our person, and the better sort of them shall be received as domestics in our royal family.

Moreover, they shall have the free exercise of their own laws, both in Jerusalem, and in the three dependent provinces; committing it to the High-Priest's care, to see that no Jew be suffered to worship in any other temple but that of Jerusalem.

We do hereby grant them likewise the yearly allowance of fifteen thousand shekels of silver toward the charge of their sacrifices out of our own coffers, and discharge the priests and officers attending the service of the temple, of the ten thousand drachma's that were formerly paid to our predecessors, as in reason we ought to do.

It is our further will, that whosoever shall fly to the temple of Jerusalem, or to the liberties thereof, for any debt, whether to the king or

otherwise, shall be protected, both in his person and goods, from any trouble or molestation.

We likewise give leave, and require, that the temple be repaired, strong walls and turrets erected, and garrisons put into such places as ye shall think fit to raise and fortify; and all this to be done at our own proper charge.

These were the promises of Demetrius, who wrote to the Jews accordingly.

At this juncture, Alexander raised a powerful army, and advanced at the head of it against the enemy. An engagement ensued, and the left wing of Demetrius pressing the right of Alexander, they pursued their advantage so far, that they got much plunder; but the right wing, where the king fought in person, was forced to give way, and they were totally routed.

Demetrius acquitted himself with gallantry, killing some, pursuing others, and defending himself, till at last his horse, plunging into a bog, he was over-powered by multitudes that pressed upon him, and could have no relief. However, he fought on foot, till his body was covered with darts and arrows. Thus valiantly fell Demetrius, after a reign of eleven years.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

ONIAS OBTAINS PERMISSION TO BUILD A TEMPLE IN EGYPT. CONTEST BETWEEN THE JEWS AND SAMARITANS, RELATIVE TO THEIR TEMPLE AND WORSHIP. DECIDED IN FAVOUR OF THE JEWS. ADVOCATES FOR THE SAMARITANS, ACCORDING TO AGREEMENT ARE ADJUDGED TO THE PENALTY OF DEATH. JONATHAN IS HIGHLY HONOURED BY ALEXANDER. HIS SUCCESS AGAINST HIS IDOLATROUS ENEMIES. IS COURTEOUSLY RECEIVED BY KING PTOLEMY. VARIOUS FORTUNES OF PTOLEMY AND ALEXANDER. DEATH OF THOSE PRINCES. JONATHAN INVESTS JERUSALEM. OBTAINS THE SANCTION OF DEMETRIUS.

ONIAS, the son of *Onians* the High-Priest, who lived in a kind of exile from his own country, with *Ptolemy Philometor*, at Alexandria, finding Judea so terribly ravaged by the Macedonians; and desirous of acquiring immortal fame, resolved to try if he could obtain leave from king *Ptolemy*, and his queen *Cleopatra*, to build a temple in Egypt, after the model of that of Jerusalem, and to supply it with Priests and Levites of his own family.

This design occurred to him from a prediction of the prophet *Isaiah*, at least six hundred years before; presaging that in time to come, there should be a temple erected in Egypt, to the honour of the great God, and that it should be the work of a Jew. Onias was so possessed with this revelation, that he wrote a letter to

Ptolemy

Ptolemy and Cleopatra, to this effect: When I had the honour to serve your majesties in the field, I passed through several countries, and observed, that in the provinces of Celo-Syria, Phenice, and Leontopolis, in the land of Heliopolis, and in several other places, the Jews had no uniformity in their temples, and therefore could not agree among themselves about it; as is the case with the Egyptians, by reason of the multitude of temples, and the diversity of religion.

As I have found out a certain place near the castle of Bubastes upon the plain, where there are great store of materials for building, and plenty of beasts appointed for sacrifice, it is my humble request, that you will permit me to purge and demolish a ruinous temple there, that was never consecrated to any deity, and in the place of it to erect another, after the model of that at Jerusalem, with a dedication of it to the most high God, upon condition, that prayers be there offered up for the safety and prosperity of your royal person and family; to the end that all the Jews in your dominions may by this means be united, and better enabled to do your majesties service. This is no more than what the Prophet Isaiah had foretold, that God would have a holy place in Egypt.

The piety that the king, and his queen Cleopatra expressed upon the receipt of the letter, will appear by their answer, wherein they discharged themselves of having any hand in the impious violation of the law, and cast the whole blame of it upon Onias in these terms:

KING PTOLEMY AND QUEEN CLEOPATRA TO ONIAS, JOY AND HEALTH.

WE have read and considered your letter of request, wherein you desire to cleanse and purify an old ruinous temple at Leontopolis near Bubastes upon the plain, within the jurisdiction of Heliopolis, and can hardly conceive how a temple in a place so unclean, and haunted with such varieties of detestable animals, should be in any measure acceptable to God. But as you refer yourself for justification to the predictions of the Prophet Isaiah, we do hereby grant unto you full licence and permission, provided it be done without giving offence to God in the breach of his laws.

Onias had no sooner obtained this concession, than he applied himself to the raising of the temple and the altar, according to the draught of that at Jerusalem, though it was much short of it both in bulk and magnificence. Having thus accomplished his design, Onias did not want Priests and Levites of his own persuasion to assist him in the divine worship, and in the services of the temple.

There happened at Alexandria a violent dispute, between the Jews and the Samaritans that erected the temple at Garizin, in the days of Alexander the Great, concerning that temple and the manner of worshiping, so that the king was forced upon an appeal to take the matter into his own cognizance, and pass judgment upon the merits of the cause.

The

The point was this: The Jews insisted that the temple at Jerusalem, was the only temple extant that was warranted and authorized by the laws of Moses. The Samaritans stood up for the temple at Garizin, and both parties by consent referred themselves to the arbitration of the king with his ministers and counsellors, desiring only that council might be heard on both sides, and that sentence of death might pass upon the party that should be found guilty.

Sabbeus and *Theodosius* were for the Samaritans, and *Andronicus* the son of *Messalan*, for the Jews; binding themselves by oath on both sides, in the presence of God and the king, to offer nothing in proof, but what was according to the law, and desiring that the breach of that oath might be made death.

The king called his friends and counsellors about him to try the cause. The Jews of Alexandria were greatly concerned least their advocate might be unequal to the important cause, and much grieved to find the sacred authority of the temple at Jerusalem, the most antient and noble frame and institution in the whole world, brought into question.

Upon a debate who should speak first, Sabbeus and Theodosius gave the precedence to Andronicus, who opened the cause, and elaborately set forth the sanctity, and venerable antiquity of the temple of Jerusalem, even from the very original, according to the law; observing the uninterrupted succession of the priesthood through all ages, with the honour and majesty of the place, as it was celebrated from time to time, with the magnificence and bounty of all the kings of Asia; whereas the temple of Garizin then in question, was so obscure in all respects, that little more notice was taken of it.

By these and other powerful arguments the king was prevailed upon to give sentence in favour of Jerusalem, and to adjudge Sabbeus and Theodosius to death, according to the conditions of the proposal. This was the state of affairs with the Alexandrian Jews in the days of Ptolemy Philometor.

After the death of Demetrius, Alexandria took upon himself the government of Syria; and by a letter to Ptolemy Philometor, sent him a proposal of a match with his daughter, suggesting, that it would neither be dishonourable or unreasonable after the overthrow of Demetrius, and (through God's favour,) the recovery of a kingdom that belonged to him in right of his father, to receive him into his alliance.

Ptolemy was so well pleased with this overture, that he immediately wrote him a letter congratulating him upon all his victories and successes, promising him his daughter in marriage, and appointing Ptolemais for the place of meeting; where he would wait upon him with his daughter Cleopatra, and there consummate the nuptials. Ptolemy went directly to the place with his daughter, where he found Alexander, and celebrated the marriage, with such a treasure of gold and silver for her portion as become the mag-

magnificence of so great a prince. Jonathan the High-Priest was invited by Alexander to the nuptials, where both the kings welcomed him with honour and presents on both sides. Alexander appointed him to change his habit, put on a purple robe, and take his place next to himself upon the throne, commanding also the chief officers to attend him into the heart of the city, and make proclamation that no man should presume, upon his peril, either to calumniate, accuse, or otherwise give him the least molestation.

Such were the kindness and respect that Alexander had for Jonathan, that he reckoned him among the choicest of his friends, and treated him with every token of esteem.

At this time Demetrius, the son of the late Demetrius, embarked with a body of mercenaries, and passed with them out of Crete into Cilicia. Alexander alarmed at the news of this expedition, hastened from Phenice to Antioch, to put affairs in a posture of defence before Demetrius could get thither; committing the government of Cœle-Syria, in the mean time, to the care of Apollonius, who marched with an army to Jamnia, and from thence sent Jonathan the High-Priest an expostulatory message, demanding what privilege he had to live at ease and liberty, and to withdraw himself from the service of the public?

"The scandal, said he, is laid at my door, for suffering this affront, without reducing you to subjection. If you are as brave as you would be thought to be, come down from your hiding-places in the mountains, and meet me like a man upon the plain, sword in hand, and cast the issue of the cause upon that trial.

"I am now at the head of a body of the choicest men in the empire, and men that in feats of arms have ever had the ascendant of your ancestors, wherefore I dare you once again to give me a meeting in some indifferent place, where swords, not stones, shall decide the controversy, and leave the vanquished party no possibility of saving themselves by flight."

Jonathan was so incensed with the insolent challenge, that he marched out of Jerusalem with ten thousand chosen men, and his brother Simon with him; and coming up to Joppa, encamped there. But Apollonius having a garrison in the town, they shut their gates against him, so that he put himself in posture for an assault: whereupon the inhabitants, through fear of a storm, delivered up the place.

When Apollonius understood that his antagonist was possessed of Joppa, he betook himself with three thousand horse and eight thousand foot to Azotus, and from thence, by easy marches, to Joppa; where he drew off a little to engage Jonathan in the open plain, depending upon his superiority of numbers.

Jonathan advanced; who, when he found the enemy in a plain field, gave him battle. Apollonius had planted a thousand horse in an ambush near a brook, to fall upon the enemy's rear, which Jonathan was

aware of, and without any difficulty, prevented; for, drawing up his men in a square, that fronted every side, so they were ready on all hands to receive the charge.

The engagement continued till evening, when Jonathan ordered his brother Simon, with part of his army, to charge the enemy's main body, having commanded his own men, only to receive the darts and arrows of the horse upon their bucklers, without any other resistance.

They kept themselves upon their guard, till the enemy had expended all their offensive weapons, without doing any execution; for they stood so thick, that their darts fell upon their bucklers, which they could not pierce.

The enemy was so spent with this manner of fighting, from morning till the afternoon, that Simon took that opportunity of attacking their main body; and was so bravely seconded by his soldiers, that he broke and put them to flight.

The horse, upon this attack, fled in the greatest confusion imaginable. Jonathan closely pursued them as far as Azotus, killed great numbers, and forced the rest into the temple of Dagon, for sanctuary. He also took the city, set fire to it, and several neighbouring villages, and burnt them all to the ground, together with the temple of Dagon, and all the people that fled to it for protection.

The number of those that were burnt, or fell by the sword, was computed to amount to eight thousand men.

After the defeat of this army, Jonathan advanced with his troops to Askalon, and pitched his tent before the city; the inhabitants coming out to him, and treating him with many presents and tokens of respect.

After this he returned to Jerusalem victorious, and laden with spoil. In consequence of this victory Alexander affected an extraordinary approbation of the conduct of Jonathan; and, as a mark of his esteem, presented him with a golden buckle, an honour peculiar only to the royal family; and conferred on him the government of Accaron.

At the same time, Ptolemy Philomoter, with both land and sea-forces, came into Syria, to the assistance of his son-in-law, Alexander, where he was received with great honour, according to the king's order in Azotus.

In this place he was accosted with complaints, of the burning of Dagon's temple, every one exclaiming against Jonathan, as the author of that outrage, besides the havock he had made in the country by fire and sword. Ptolemy heard these complaints, without returning any answer. Jonathan met him at Joppa, and was received with magnificence and honour; and after conducting the king to the river Eleutherus, returned to Jerusalem.

When Ptolemy arrived in the city of Ptolemais, a plot was laid against his life, by the treachery of Alexander, and conducted by his friend Ammonius.

This device being discovered, he wrote to Alexander, to demand justice,

tice. But Alexander refusing to deliver Ammonius up, convinced him that he himself had been concerned in it.

From his attachment to this infamous person, he now incurred the hatred of Ptolemy, as he had before done that of the people of Antioch; but the traitor soon after met with a deserved fate.

Ptolemy, incensed at the perfidy and ingratitude of Alexander, determined to disclaim all relationship to him; and therefore took away his daughter from her husband, entered into a league with Demetrius against Alexander, on condition of giving him Cleopatra in marriage, and putting him in possession of his father's kingdom.

Demetrius was well pleased, both with the alliance and the woman. But the people of Antioch had such an aversion to Demetrius, on his father's account, that Ptolemy had a hard task to persuade them to receive him for their king, whom they looked upon as their enemy. Yet such was their hatred to Alexander upon the score of Ammonius, that they were prevailed upon to free the city of Ammonius; who thereupon escaped into Cilicia from Antioch.

Ptolemy upon this, made his entrance into Antioch, where he was saluted, proclaimed, and crowned king, both by the citizens and the soldiery, that is, in the right of Asia, and of Egypt.

As he was a person of a just, temperate and discreet disposition, he managed his affairs to the intire satisfaction of his own people; and likewise without giving any cause of jealousy or envy to the Romans.

After this proclamation, he called a general council of the Antiochians, and endeavoured to attach them to Demetrius as their king, assuring them, that the sense of the present obligation would utterly extinguish the remembrance and mis-understandings past; and undertaking himself to take care, that in the administration of the government he should not so much as offer to commit an action unworthy of his dignity and the trust reposed in him.

Upon this representation and assurance, the whole body of the people was prevailed upon to take Demetrius for their king.

Alexander was at this time ravaging Syria, and the country about Antioch, with fire and sword, at the head of a numerous and powerful army, that he brought out of Cilicia; when Ptolemy, with his son-in-law Demetrius (the nuptials being celebrated) encountered and routed him, forcing him to fly to Arabia.

It happened in that battle that Ptolemy's horse taking fright at the braying of an elephant, threw his rider, and gave his enemies the advantage of giving him many wounds upon the head, which misfortune would certainly have cost him his life upon the spot, if he had not been rescued by a party of his guards. But such was his condition, that he lay speechless for four days, not understanding what was said to him. Upon the fifth day, when he was recovering a little, one *Zabelus*, an Arabian prince, having cut off Alexander's

ander's head, sent it to Ptolemy, who was greatly pleased, both with the action, and the spectacle. But he had not long indulged his eye with this sight, before he was summoned to pay that debt from which no mortal is exempt.

Demetrius, succeeded Alexander; he was a man of a rough, rugged temper, without regard to the obligations and services he had received from them, upon the credit of an affinity with Cleopatra. This conduct so disgusted the soldiers, that they deserted his cause, and hastened to Alexandria, leaving only the elephants behind them.

Jonathan the High-Priest, having drawn together all the force he was able to raise in Judea, invested the citadel of Jerusalem, with a resolution to dislodge the Macedonian garrison, and the fugitive Jews that had taken sactuary there.

Confident of the strength of the place, they bid him defiance; but in short were compelled to send privately to Demetrius for succour. This intelligence so incensed him, that he immediately marched out with his army from Antioch toward Jonathan; and upon his arrival at Ptolemais, sent for him by letter to come to him.

Jonathan, upon this invitation, took with him several rich presents; and, attended by the priests and elders, laid them before Demetrius.

This expedition so molified the king, that he received the presents with the utmost complacency, and in token of the obligation conferred on him by Jonathan, he confirmed the pontificate, with which he had been vested by his predecessors, and was so far from giving credit to the calumny and suggestions of the fugitive Jews against their countrymen, that upon Jonathan's request for an abatement of the tribute of Judea, together with the dependencies of Samaria, Joppa, and Galilee, to the amount of * three hundred talents. Hereupon he caused the following declaration to be made in their favour.

KING DEMETRIUS TO HIS BROTHER JONATHAN, AND TO THE WHOLE JEWISH NATION, JOY AND GREETING.

THIS is to inform you, that we have here sent you the copy of a letter, lately written to Lasthenes, our trusty and well-beloved cousin.

KING DEMETRIUS TO HIS FATHER LASTHENES, GREETING.

We are so sensible of the dutiful and affectionate return we have from time to time received from our friends the Jews, in an acknowledgment of the good-will we bear them, that it is our good pleasure to give them some signal mark of the esteem we have for them.

* Three hundred Syrian talents, were in value worth twelve thousand eight hundred and thirty two pounds, seven pence halfpenny of our money.

Wherefore,

Wherefore, we do by these presents assign the three governors of Aphere ma, Lydda, and Ramathem, that were taken from the Samaritans, together with all the land thereunto belonging to the use and advantage of Judea, discharging likewise the priests at Jerusalem of all the duties by them formerly allowed to our forefathers, as well upon corn and fruits, as upon salt-pits, and crown-taxes, with an express caution and prohibition that nothing of this be expected from them for the future.

Be sure to send the copy of this letter to Jonathan, and have it hung up in the most conspicuous place of the holy temple.

Affairs were now settled in so amicable a manner, that Demetrius, flattering himself into an opinion, that there was no longer any danger, discharged his army without their full pay, retaining only a body of mercenaries that he had raised in Crete, and other of the neighbouring islands: so that dismissing his father's old troops without any stipend, contrary to the practice of his ancestors, who paid them in peace as well as in war, and kept them in readiness to serve upon any occasion; he, by that means, lost the affection of his people.

CHAP.

CHAP III.

JONATHAN BESIEGED THE TOWER OF JERUSALEM, ASSISTS DEMETRIUS WITH A SUPPLY OF TROOPS. AFFORDS HIM SUCCOUR UPON AN IMPORTANT OCCASION, BUT RECEIVES AN UNGRATEFUL RETURN. DEMETRIUS ROUTED BY JONATHAN, IN ALLIANCE WITH ANTIOCHUS AND TRYPHON. JONATHAN SURPRIZED BY AN AMBUSH. MATTHIAS AND JUDAS MAKE A VALIANT DEFENCE. JONATHAN SENDS AN EMBASSY TO ROME AND LACEDEMON, AND OBTAINS A LEAGUE WITH THOSE NATIONS. THE JEWISH SECTS. JONATHAN AND SIMON UNDERTAKE TO FORTIFY JERUSALEM. DEMETRIUS ROUTED AND TAKEN PRISONER.

THIS defection of the army from Demetrius was so notorious, that *Diodotus*, otherwise called *Tryphon*, a native of Apamia, and formerly an officer under Alexander, availing himself of the accusation, applied to *Malchus* an Arabian, who was at that time governor of young Antiochus, the son of Alexander, informing him how desperately the soldiers were bent against Demetrius, and proposing, if Malchus would put Antiochus into his hands, he made no doubt of getting him restored to his father's throne.

Malchus was at first diffident of the execution of his promise; but by the force of entreaty, he was in a short time brought to a compliance.

During these transactions Jonathan the High-Priest laid close siege

to the citadel at Jerusalem, with a resolution to clear, not only that castle, but other strong holds, where the fugitive Jews sheltered themselves: insomuch that he sent an embassy to Demetrius with presents desiring him to withdraw all his men that were in any of the fortresses of Judea. Demetrius assured him that he was ready to gratify him, not only in that, but in a great matter, as soon as he could dispatch the present war, which so employed him at that time, that he was not at liberty to attend any thing else; but abjured Jonathan by all that was sacred in friendship, to send him a supply of men, as his own troops were gone over to the enemy. Jonathan soon after this sent the king a reinforcement of three thousand choice men.

The people of Antioch were so enraged against Demetrius, both for his father's sake, and his own, that they desired nothing more than an opportunity for revenge; wherefore upon the news of this relief from Jonathan, and reconsideration of the hazard of growing stronger and stronger, if they were not beforehand with him, they betook themselves to their arms, and immediately beset the palace, as if they were ready to give the assault. But their chief business was rather to secure the avenues, and seize the king as he was coming out.

Demetrius finding himself thus beset, drew up his foreign mercenaries, together with Jonathan's auxiliaries, and charged the enemy, but met with a smart repulse, and was obliged to retreat. The Jews, upon this returned into the palace, where they mounted the battlements; and from thence with darts and arrows so galled the enemy, that they forced them from one house to another, without sustaining much loss to themselves.

The next thing they did, was to fire the city, which being for the greater part built of wood, and the houses standing close, was easily effected. The inhabitants finding that the fire could not be extinguished, shifted for themselves; the Jews still pursuing them as before, and doing great execution.

This rout put an end to their fighting; and all that now remained was to save their wives and children. But the Jews took advantage of their confusion, and falling upon them, according to the king's order, killed great numbers of them in the pursuit, and forced the rest to lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion.

This victory put an end to the war; and the rebels being pardoned, the booty was given to the Jews, whom Demetrius sent back to Jonathan, with a most honourable testimony of their valour, acknowledging that it was to their courage he stood indebted for that success. But this spirit of gratitude did not possess him long; for he afterward, not only broke his promise, but threatened him with a war, if he should not, for the future, make good those tributes to himself, which the Jews had formerly paid to his predecessors. He would have put his threats into execution, if Tryphon had not diverted

verted him, by forcing him to make use of that army against himself which he had designed against Jonathan, who being now returned out of Arabia into Syria, with young Antiochus, set the crown upon his head, and by the help of the soldiers, who had been defrauded of their pay, made open war upon Demetrius, defeated him in a pitched battle, made himself master of his elephants, and of the city of Antioch, and forced him back into Cilicia.

Antiochus, upon this resolution, sent an embassy to Jonathan, and acknowledged him his friend and ally, established him in the pontificate, put him in the possession of the four governments that were assigned to Judea, and gave his brother Simon the command of all his forces, from Tyre to the borders of Sidon; presenting Jonathan over and above, with several cups of gold, purple garments with a golden buckle, and the privilege of using and wearing these ensigns of state, and adopting him also into the roll of his choicest friends.

Jonathan was so sensible of the multiplied bounties, and marks of honour he had received from Antiochus, that he forthwith dispatched an express to Antiochus and Tryphon, with a most affectionate tender of his friendship and service, with his readiness to join against Demetrius as a common enemy; reflecting upon him also, as the most ungrateful of men, in returning so much evil for all the service he had done him.

No sooner had Jonathan the commission for raising of men, than he began to raise levies in Syria and Phenice, and from thence proceeded to all the neighbouring towns and cities, where he was received with great honour, but raised no recruits, among the Jews.

Upon his coming afterward to Askalon, the people kindly entertained him; he took occasion to lay before them (as he did at other places in Celo-Syria) how much it was their interest and duty to take up arms against Demetrius in behalf of Antiochus, having so fair an opportunity to be revenged of him for the injuries he had done them.

He wrought upon them so effectually by his advice, that they promised supplies. But advancing afterward to Gaza upon the same good office to Antiochus, he found, to his great admiration, the gates shut against him, and the people obstinately resolved to abide by Demetrius.

Jonathan incensed at this indignity, divided his army and assaulting the town with one part, with the other went up and down to burn and lay waste the country.

The inhabitants of Gaza after a short time, seeing nothing but inevitable destruction before their eyes, no appearance of any relief from Demetrius; nor, so much as the hope of any to so remote a distance, upon second thought judged it most advisable to make a seasonable and submissive application to Jonathan by their deputies, who were as frankly received on the other hand into his interest and friendship.

Jonathan,

Jonathan, in fine, accepted of their proposals and hostages, and sent them away to Jerusalem, passing himself through the country to Damascus.

Demetrius in the mean while had a strong army encamped before Cades, upon the borders of Tyre and Galilee, with a design to draw Jonathan out of Syria by way of diversion, to the assistance of Galilee, on a presumption that he would attend to the interest of his own country in preference to all others; but this did not hinder Jonathan from advancing with all speed to encounter him, leaving his brother Simon in his absence to take care of Judea.

Simon at the same time, with what men he could get together out of that country, marched up to Bethsura, and assaulted it, though accounted the strongest and most defensible place in all Judea, and in the hands of the faction of Demetrius. When the garrison found themselves so pressed with works and engines, that the place seemed to be in some danger, they sent a messenger to Simon, for leave to quit the place, and without any molestation or violence to march away to Demetrius.

They were brought to these terms, by the apprehension of being all put to the sword, if the place was taken by force. Simon granted them their own conditions, and put another garrison in the place of what was there before.

Jonathan at this time departing from the place, where he had first encamped, advanced in the plain of Asor, not in the least suspecting any enemy upon that quarter; but a party of Demetrius, having intelligence of his design the day before, placed an ambush under a mountain, and marched toward him with their body in the open plain.

As soon as Jonathan saw them in order of battle, and ready to charge, he gave his men the best orders he could in so short a time, how to govern themselves in the action; but when the Jews came to discover the ambush, they turned their backs immediately, for fear of being pent up betwixt the two bodies, and cut off.

The terror was so general, that Jonathan had hardly a man to stand by him, saving only two captains of his guards, *Matthias* the son of *Absalom*, and *Judas* the son of *Calphi*, who, with a band of fifty brave men, stood their ground, and made so desperate a charge on the enemy's front, that Jonathan's deserters finding the soldiers of Demetrius in confusion, and almost ready to run, rallied, and falling upon them afresh, killed two thousand upon the spot, put to flight the rest, and pursued them to Cades, up to their very tents.

Jonathan after this glorious victory, returned to Jerusalem; and in this height of successes sent ambassadors to Rome, with a commission to renew an alliance with them, and with orders to go to Lacedemon in their return, upon the same account. His proposals were accepted, and his ambassadors honourably treated, and dispatched away with letters recommendatory to the kings of Europe

rope and Asia for their safe passage. They called likewise upon the Lacedemonians, in their way back again, and presented them with letters, as follow:

JONATHAN THE HIGH-PRIEST, AND THE ELDERS OF THE NATION, THE PRIESTS, AND OTHER PEOPLE OF THE JEWS, UNTO THE EPHORI, THE SENATE, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE LACEDEMONIANS, THEIR BRETHREN, SEND GREETING:

WHEREAS we find in a letter of a remote date from *Arius* your king, to *Onias* our High-Priest, (a copy whereof we send you here enclosed) importing a near affinity of blood betwixt us: and whereas it appeareth also by the testimony we then rendered to Arius himself, with what joy we received the intimation of such an alliance in that letter; this gives you to understand, that we should have put in our claim to the honour of your friendship before, but that we were not willing to prevent you in the glory of leading the example. Be pleased to take notice, however, that from the first ratification of an amity betwixt us to this day, we have never forgotten you in our prayers to God for your prosperity, health, and victory over all your enemies; and we have been as tender likewise in all our sufferings and distresses, under the persecution of our covetous and ambitious neighbours, not to involve, either yourselves, or any other of our friendly allies, in our trouble; but our circumstances being now easier, and our wars, by God's Providence, over, we have sent *Numenius*, the son of *Antiochus*, and *Antipates*, the son of *Jason*, being senators and men of honour, to the Romans, and with letters also to yourselves for the strengthening and renewing of a friendly understanding betwixt us. Be pleased to return us what answer you shall think meet, and let us understand wherein we may be useful to you; in a full trust and confidence, that you shall find us ever ready to serve you in all offices of affection and respect.

The Lacedemonians not only gave the Jewish ambassadors, an honourable reception, but a memorial, which was formed and confirmed by public authority, testifying the friendship and alliance between the two states.

The Jews were divided at this time into three sects, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.

The Pharisees held, that men were subjected to a fatality, in some cases, and left at liberty in others, to act as they pleased.

The Sadduces did not allow of any fatality; but that every man had it in his own power to make his condition better or worse, according as he pursued right or wrong measures.

The Essenes, on the other hand, acknowledged no other power than that of an over-ruling destiny, working according to the pre-determination of an irresistible fate.

The officers of Demetrius were now advanced toward Jonathan, at the head of a numerous army, in hopes of retrieving the reputation they had lost by their late overthrow.

But Jonathan having intelligence that they were approaching, advanced to meet them at Amathias, with a resolution to oppose their passage into Judea, encamping himself within fifty furlongs of the enemy, and sending scouts abroad for discovery of their motions.

Upon the return of the spies, he found that their design was to surprize him in his quarters; so that he put every thing into a posture of defence, planted his out-scouts to the best advantage, and kept his men under arms, informing them of the enemy's design.

When the officers of Demetrius understood that their plot was discovered, they were greatly embarrassed in what manner to proceed, and at length came to a determination to depart under covert of the night.

The next morning, by dawn of day, Jonathan marched up with a resolution to force the camp; when finding it abandoned, he posted away after the fugitives, but to no purpose; for they had passed the river Elentherus, into a place of safety, before he could reach them.

He took his course next into Arabia, ravaged the country of the Nabatheans, took a great many cattle, and prisoners, and sold them at Damascus.

Simon at the same time made a progress through Judea and Palestine as far as Askalon, where he garrisoned all the places of defence; and after fortifying and securing the country, marched to Joppa, took possession of the place, and left a strong guard in it, to keep the inhabitants in awe, who would otherwise have betrayed the town to Demetrius.

Having thus provided against all casualties, Jonathan and Simon returned to Jerusalem, where the High-Priest summoning the people together into the temple, set them upon repairing the ruinous walls, both of the city, and the holy place; fortifying them, with lofty and strong towers; advising them also to erect another wall to cut off all communication between the castle and the city, put good garrisons into other convenient places, and keep the country in a defensible condition.

The people were highly pleased with this counsel, so that he made it his own province to take care of the city, and committed the rest to his brother.

Demetrius having passed the river, advanced into Mesopotamia, with a design of making himself master, not only of the country, but of Babylon itself; proposing also the reduction of the upper provinces, to make that quarter the seat of war; for the Greeks and Macedonians therein, had sent him several embassies and invitations to come over to them, with assurances, that upon his appearing they would submit themselves to his direction, and assist him with their arms against Arsaces the king of Parthia.

Encouraged by these hopes, Demetrius proceeded immediately toward them, concluding it would be easy to beat Tryphon out of Syria, after one powerful defeat given to the Parthians.

When

When he arrived among them, he was received by the people of that country with great acclamations, where he put himself at the head of a brave army, and made war with Arsaces, by whom he was utterly routed, his army destroyed, and himself taken prisoner.

CHAP IV.

JONATHAN IS MADE PRISONER, AND HIS ARMY ROUTED THROUGH THE TREACHERY OF TRYPHON. SUCCEEDED BY SIMON, WHO AGREES WITH TRYPHON FOR JONATHAN'S RELEASEMENT. JONATHAN MURDERED BY TRYPHON. SIMON PERFORMS MANY FEATS OF VALOUR, IN THE GLORIOUS CAUSE OF HIS COUNTRY. FARTHER INSTANCES OF THE PERFIDY OF THE TRAITOR, WHO IS AT LENGTH TAKEN AND SLAIN.

THE fall of Demetrius encouraged Tryphon to aspire to the crown; but as his ambitious designs could not be promoted, while Jonathan (a true friend to Antiochus) was in a condition to oppose them; the first thing to be done, was to contrive how to take him off. To this end he went from Antioch to Bethsam, where he found Jonathan with forty thousand men ready to serve him in case of need.

Tryphon finding him in this posture of defence, made use of presents, and fair words, to inveigle him, when he saw nothing could be effected by force, he gave charge to his officers, to pay the same respect and obedience to Jonathan as they did to himself; proposing by these arts of insinuation, to veil the treachery of his heart, and create in him such a trust and confidence as might expose him, for want of caution, to credulity and surprize.

After a long conference upon divers subjects, he advised Jonathan, as the war was at an end, to discharge his army, as an unnecessary burden, retaining only a competent guard about his person, with which they might go together to Ptolemais, as he was resolved to put himself in possession of that city, *For*, says he, *I am come hither to deliver those places into your hands.*

Jonathan not suspecting the fraud of the perfidious Tryphon, dismissed all his army except three thousand men, two thousand of whom he left in Galilee, and carried the third with him in company with Tryphon to Ptolemais.

He was no sooner entered the town, but the inhabitants, according to their instructions, shut their gates upon him, took him prisoner, and cut off all his soldiers. Part of the army was afterwards sent to Galilee, with an intent to massacre the other two thousand there; but they having timely notice of their treachery to Jonathan, they betook themselves to their arms immediately upon the report, and so made their escape. Tryphon's soldiers were so well pleased with the resolution of these men, that they let them escape without molestation.

The disaster which befel Jonathan, the darling of the whole Jewish nation, struck the inhabitants of

Jerusalem

Jerusalem with universal terror and consternation, and filled them with the most dreadful apprehensions of impending danger, from the loss of their valiant leader. Nor were their fears without foundation; for the Jews were dispersed as a people destitute of a head.

Tryphon levied an army to make an inroad into Judea, but Simon observing the consternation of the people, called them together, and addressed them in the following manner:

I need not tell you, my friends and countrymen, how frankly I, my father, and my bretheren, have expoſed ourſelves to the utmoſt difficulties and hazards, in aſſerting our common liberty; ſo that it is no new thing for our family to lay down our lives in the defence of our laws, and religion, neither am I ſo inſenſible of the authority of thoſe domeſtic examples, as to be wrought upon by any terror to the ſacrificing of my honour and my duty, for the ſaving of my life.

Wherefore without looking any farther for a leader, you have a man before you, who is ready to do or ſuffer any thing, for your preſervation and welfare; do but you only follow where I ſhall lead you.

I do not reckon myſelf better than my brethren; neither do I value my life at a higher rate than they have done; nor am I ſo degenerate, as to think of ſaving that life by cowardice, when my country and religion are at ſtake, which our family has ever accounted as the moſt heroic of their adventures.

No, my friends and brethren, it ſhall never be ſaid, that I have derogated from the dignity of my family.

I make no donbt at all, but that God in his good time will, even by my hand, avenge you of your enemies; deliver you, with your wives and children, from your oppreſſors, and vindicate the holy temple againſt the abominations and violence of your malicious perſecutors.

The multitude were ſo affected by this ſpeech and declaration of Simon, that they preſently took courage, ſuſpended their fears, and revived their ſpirits, and unanimouſly exclaimed, *None ſo fit as Simon to ſucceed to the office of his brave brothers, Judas and Jonathan; therefore let Simon be our general, and whatever he commands ſhall be obeyed.*

The new general collected as many of the people, as were fit to bear arms, and ſet about the neceſſary repairs of the fortifications of the city, which done, he ſent Jonathan the ſon of Abſalom, to Joppa, with orders to turn the inhabitants out of the town, leſt they ſhould deliver it up to Tryphon, while he continued at Jeruſalem, to guard that city.

Tryphon was now upon his march with a great army from Ptolemais; and arriving at Judea, brought Jonathan with him in bonds.

Simon met him with his troops near the city of Addida, upon a mountain that overlooked the plain. When Tryphon came to underſtand that the Jews had choſen Simon for their general, he ſent meſſengers to him, to try if he could circumvent him alſo by a plot. With this view he

he sent him word, that if he desired the release of his brother, he might send him an * hundred talents of silver, and two sons of Jonathan with it as hostages, that when he should be set at liberty, he should not seduce the Jews from their allegiance to the king, suggesting at the same time, that he was to be kept in custody only till the king's money should be paid.

Simon discerned the fraud; but considering, on the one hand, that though he run the danger of losing the money, without obtaining his brother's release besides the delivery of his sons to the mercy of an enemy, yet their occurred difficulties, on the other hand, no less perplexing; for he was afraid that upon his denial of the money for a ransom, or the sons for hostages, he should be branded with the odium of being accessary to his brother's death.

Upon this, he called a council, told them Tryphon's demands; giving his opinion also, that there was treachery at the bottom. But intimating, that it would be better to send both the money and the sons, at a venture, than incur a suspicion, upon not hearkening to Tryphon's conditions, of being less zealous than he ought to be for the safety of his brother. Therefore a resolution was taken to send both; though Tryphon, after he had received them, broke his faith, and refused to release Jonathan, ranging up and down with his army, and ravaging the country, till he came to Dora, a city of Idumea, with an intention to make that in his way to Jerusalem, Simon keeping pace with him in his marches, and always encamping opposite to his army.

While Tryphon was upon the way, word was brought him from Jerusalem, that the garrison of the citadel was sore distressed for want of provisions, and they desired he would immediately haste to their relief.

Upon this intelligence he ordered his horse to be in readiness, as he would march without any delay to their succour; but there fell so great a snow that night, that the roads were impassable. Upon this disappointment he decamped, and went back to Celo-Syria; and passed through the country of Galaad, caused Jonathan, near the city of Bascama to be slain, and buried there and from thence returned to Antioch. Simon took care however to remove his brother's bones to his father's sepulchre at Modin, where he erected a magnificent monument to the honour of his family. It was raised upon an eminence that overlooked the whole country, and encompassed with arched walls, resting upon admirable pillars of one entire stone.

He had raised also seven pyramids for his father, mother, four brothers, and himself; a work that was deemed as complete as any of the kind in those days.

This shews the care and zeal of

* An hundred Jewish talents in value amounted to thirty four thousand two hundred and eighteen pounds, fifteen shillings of our money.

Simon for the honour of his family, and more particularly his respect for the memory of Jonathan, who had now governed the people in the quality both of prince and High-Priest, for the space of four years, his brother Simon, by the universal suffrage and consent of the people, succeeding him.

Simon had gained so great esteem and authority among the people, that they dated their writings, as well private as publick, in such or such a year of Simon the governor of the Jews, and with this addition, the most deserving patron of the nation; for under his administration, all things succeeded, both in war and peace, through the advantages he brought to his friends, and the victory he obtained over the common enemy; destroying the cities of Gaza, Joppa, and Jamnia; laying the citadel of Jerusalem level with the ground; and taking it moreover into his care, in order to prevent the same inconveniencies for the time to come.

In order to this he recommended digging up and levelling of the mountain that the castle stood upon, so as to leave the temple upon the advantage of the hither ground. Upon this case, he called an assembly, and laid before them what damage they had already suffered from this castle, and what inconvenience they might reasonably expect from it for the time to come, if ever it should fall into the hands of a hostile prince.

This method of reasoning wrought so effectually upon the multitude, that they immediately set upon demolishing the mountain, and plyed to it so hard, night and day, for there years successively, (doing duty by turns) that in the end, by indefatigable labour, they brought it under the command of the temple.

Soon after the taking Demetrius Nicanor prisoner, Tryphon secretly murdered his pupil Antiochus, the son of Alexander, in the fourth year of his guardianship, giving it out that it was only an unlucky accident in his exercises, that brought him to his end. While this rumour was new, Tryphon made interest among the soldiers, through the force of friends and money, to dispose them to the choice of himself for their next governor. They observed that Demetrius was a prisoner to the Parthians, and Antiochus would never forget the deserters of his brother.

By this artifice Tryphon paved his way to the crown, nor was much argument required to inforce his cause, as all the people judged it would make their fortunes; so that they advanced him to the throne, without any farther ceremony. This elevation soon discovered the genuine disposition of the tyrant, who immediately threw off the mask he had so artfully assumed to prosecute his designs, and shewed himself to be a dissolute wretch in his manners. His adversaries laid hold of it very much to his disadvantage; for the soldiers quickly grew weary of his tyranny, and went over to Cleopatra the wife of Demetrius, who had then shut up herself in Seleucia, with her children, while Antiochus, (otherwise called Soter,

Soter, and the brother of Demetrius,) went roving up and down from place to place.

Cleopatra, prompted by the encouragement of the military men that deserted him at the instance and persuasion of friends, and the apprehension she herself had of the Seleucians giving up the town to Tryphon, sent a messenger to Antiochus, with a proposal of marriage, and a tender of her kingdom to him, as well as her person. Antiochus embraced the proposal, and upon closing with Cleopatra on those terms, the people came in to him in such numbers, that in a short time he was at the head of a considerable army, made war upon Tryphon, overcame him in a battle, and beating him out of Syria, pursued him to Phenice, besetting him at last in Dora, a strong and well fortified hold.

He sent ambassadors also to Simon the High-Priest of the Jews, upon a treaty of alliance, who frankly accepted of his terms, and soon after sent him a supply of provisions and monies for the carrying on the siege, which was a service at that time so acceptable to Antiochus, that he looked upon him as his best friend; but Tryphon made his escape out of Dora, and fled to Apamia, where the town was taken and himself slain, after he had held the government three years.

CHAP. V.

TREACHERY OF ANTIOCHUS AND PTOLEMY, TOWARD SIMON, WHO IS MURDERED AT THE INSTIGATION OF THE LATTER. HYRCANUS SUCCEEDS TO THE PONTIFICATE. GLORIOUS RESOLUTION OF HIS MOTHER, WHO IS AT LENGTH PUT TO DEATH BY PTOLEMY. HYRCANUS FAITHFULLY ESPOUSES THE CAUSE OF THE JEWS, MAKES SEVERAL ALLIANCES IN THEIR FAVOUR. VARIOUS FORTUNES OF DIVERS EASTERN PRINCES.

ANTIOCHUS being naturally covetous, and consequently ungrateful, was so far from acknowledging the good offices Simon had done him, that he sent an army under the command of *Cendebeus*, to lay Judea waste, and to seize upon his person. This perfidious indignity put the good old man into such a rage, that forgetting the infirmities of his age, he marched immediately at the head of an army with the resolution of a hero in the prime of youth, to engage the enemy; sending his son before him with some of his choicest troops, and himself following with the rest, planting ambushes up and down in his avenues, and ordering all things to his utmost satisfaction.

When Simon had been eight years governor of Judea, he was treacherously murdered, by his son-in-law Ptolemy, upon an invitation to an entertainment. He had his wife and two sons already in custody, and his ruffians

ruffians were dispatched abroad to take his third son John, otherwise called Hyrcanus, and kill him; but the young man having notice of the danger, took sanctuary in Jerusalem, where the people treated him with the utmost affection, partly for the love and veneration they had for the memory of his father, and partly from the aversion they had to Ptolemy, whom they bravely repulsed upon an attempt to enter at one gate, because they had already received Hyrcanus at another.

Upon this indignity Ptolemy withdrew himself to a castle not far from Jerico, called Dagen. Hyrcanus at the same time entered upon the pontificate, and officiated as successor to his father. The first thing he did upon his entrance into that solemn order, was to offer up sacrifices and praises in due form; which duty being over, he marched to the assault of the fort; where the only difficulty he met with, was to support the effect of his tenderness for his mother and his brethren, whom Ptolemy exposed from the top of the wall, lashing and tormenting them in the sight of all the people, with menaces to cast them headlong from the battlements, unless Hyrcanus immediately abandoned the siege.

Hyrcanus judging at first, that the slower he was in his attack, the more lenity Ptolemy would shew to his relations, paused with himself on his future proceedings; but his mother observing him deliberate and relent, called out to him aloud, and encouraged him both with her hand and voice, to make a right use of that barbarous spectacle, and without any regard to her's and her children's sufferings, to do himself and his family right, in a just vengeance upon the head of that execrable monster; for she herself desired nothing more than to expire in torment, on condition that that unnatural tyrant might be punished according to his desert.

The amazing bravery of this woman determined Hyrcanus, at all events, to pursue his resolution; but observing that the more they pressed upon the fort, the fiercer Ptolemy was in his tortures on his mother. Resentment and revenge gave way to the over-ruling softness of a dutiful son; so that through irresolution and distraction, the siege was protracted till the sabbatical year, (the seventh year being a year of rest to the Jews, as well as the seventh day;) Ptolemy was now delivered from the war and the siege; and thereupon putting to death the mother and brother of Hyrcanus, he withdrew to *Zeno*, surnamed *Cotyla*, a tyrant who had at that time usurped the government of Philadelphia.

Antiochus had not as yet forgotten or forgiven the repulses and disgraces he had formerly received from Simon the father of Hyrcanus; so that he made an inroad into Judea in the fourth year of his reign, when he ravaged the country and drove Hyrcanus into the city, dividing his army into seven bodies round about it. They advanced but slowly at the beginning, the walls being very strong, and the place well defended.

The camp was for some time distressed

tressed for water; but that defect was plentifully supplied by a great fall of rain.

Upon a review of the place, they found it most accessible on the north side, and therefore carried on their attack principally upon that quarter, raising a hundred terrets of three stories high, which were well lined with soldiers to carry on the siege. They had likewise drawn a circumvallation of a great length and depth, to cut off all communication. But this did not hinder the defendants from making certain sallies, when at any time they saw the besiegers off their guard; but if they found them in a posture to receive them, they would make their retreat.

As there were many unserviceable persons, who wasted the provisions, Hyrcanus separated those that were fit to bear arms from the rest, and turned all the useless people out of the city; where, between Antiochus on the one hand, that stopt them from going any further, and Hyrcanus on the other, that would not let them come in, many of the poor wretches perished for want of bread.

It was now the time of the feast of tabernacles; and upon this festival, these miserable creatures were admitted into the town; whereupon the inhabitants addressed themselves to Antiochus, only to grant a truce for seven days, in honour of the solemnity; which out of a motive of religion, he readily granted, and also sent them magnificent presents for sacrifices; as bulls with gilded horns, cups of gold and silver, replenished with precious spices and perfumes; and, in fine, treated them in a manner much different from that of Antiochus Epiphanes; who, in affront to their religion, upon the taking of the temple, sacrificed hogs upon the altar, and prophaned the holy place with swines flesh, in a contempt of their laws and ceremonies, which proved the cause of an irreconcileable animosity between them; whereas the present Antiochus had the character and surname of Pious given him, in honour of the reverence he had for religion.

Hyrcanus took encouragement upon this instance of the king's justice and goodness, to move him by an embassy on the Jews behalf, for the liberty only of living one with another, according to the laws and customs of their country. The court faction, on the contrary, were for having them wholly cut off, as an insociable sort of people, that would be thought holier and wiser than their neighbours, and valued themselves upon singularity from the rest of the world, in their lives and manners. But the king had too great a respect to their piety, to put them to extremities; so that he sent word back to Hyrcanus, that upon condition the besieged would deliver up their army, undertake for the taxes of Joppa, and the rest of the cities about Judea, and receive garrisons into such towns as he should chuse; he was ready to put an end to the war.

The Jews agreed to every article, but the receiving of the garrisons, out of a regard to the scruple they

made of intermixing with strangers; but to be eased of that article, they proposed rather to give the king hostages for the performances of conditions, and five hundred talents over and above, which were accepted; three hundred of them being paid down in part, and the brother of Hyrcanus becoming one of the pledges. Upon the finishing of this treaty, the works and the battlements were thrown down, the city dismantled, and the siege raised.

Hyrcanus, after this, caused the monument of David to be opened, from whence he took three thousand talents for his own use, and furnished himself with foreign mercenaries, being the first of the nation that ever entertained an army of strangers.

He then entered into a league with Antiochus, invited him and his army into the city, where he gave them a splendid and magnificent reception, and followed him afterward with his auxiliaries into the Parthian war, as we have it upon the authority of *Nicolaus Damacenus.*

Antiochus at length came to battle with *Arsaſes,* king of the Parthians, in which action he lost both his life and his army.

His brother Demetrius, succeeded to the kingdom of Syria, being set at liberty by Arsaces, upon this invasion of Antiochus.

Hyrcanus, after the death of Antiochus, marched with his army into Syria, at that time ravaged by the flames of civil war, and almost deserted by its inhabitants.

In six months, with some difficulty, he took Medaba, Samega, and other places thereabout; and afterwards Sichem and Garizin, with the land of the Chuthites, where the temple stood, that with Alexander's permission, was built after the model of that at Jerusalem by Sanballat, one of his governors, to gratify his son-in-law Manasses, the brother of the High-Priest Jaddus, which temple was destroyed about two hundred years after.

Hyrcanus also took several places in Idumea, as Adora and Marissa; and at last, when he had subdued the whole province, made proclamation for all people to depart the land that would not submit to be circumcised. So rather than quit their country, they not only complyed in the point of circumcision, but also to all the other rites and ceremonies of the Jews.

Hyrcanus, the High-Priest, being now about to renew a league with the Romans, sent his ambassadors to the senate, with letters upon that subject. These letters being read and debated, an alliance was concluded upon the following conditions:

Fanius, the ſon of Marcus Prætor, called a ſenate in the Field of Mars, on the eighth day of the Ides of February; preſent Manlius, and Caius Semporinus, upon the buſineſs of the embaſſy of Simon, Apollonius, and Diodorus, perſons of honour and probity, and deputed by the nation of the Jews to treat about an alliance, and other public matters with the ſenate of Rome.

Whereupon it was agreed that Joppa, and the ports of Gazara with the fountains,

fountains, and other places that had been taken away by Antiochus contrary to a decree of the ſenate, ſhould be all reſtored, and the king's ſoldiers not permitted to paſs through either that, or any other part of the Roman territory, without leave.

That whatever had been done by Antiochus in the late war, ſhould be declared void, and commiſſioners appointed to take an eſtimate of what the people had ſuffered in their lands and goods by his depredations; and to ſee reparation made for all loſſes.

Upon these conditions, the senate was pleased to accept of the proposals, that were presented them by these honourable persons, in the name of their good friends and allies, the people of the Jews.

Fanius had orders likewise to furnish the ambassadors with money to defray their charges back, out of the public stock; this he accordingly did, with recommendatory letters, to all governors and officers in their way, for the convenience and security of their passage.

The success of Hyrcanus did not fail to excite the envy of Demetrius, who would willingly have come to an open rupture with him, could he have formed a proper alliance; but the Syrians, and his own soldiers, hated him to that degree, for his lewdness, that they joined in a confederacy against him, requesting of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, to send them some branch of *Seleucus's* family, and they would make him king.

Upon this application, Ptolemy sent them one *Alexander*, surnamed *Zebina*, with a considerable body of men. An engagement ensued, and Demetrius being routed, he fled to his wife Cleopatra, who was then at Ptolemais, for protection; but the gates being shut against him, he fled to Tyre, where he fell into the hands of his enemies, who kept him a while in anguish, and then put him to death.

Alexander Zebina, being now possessed of the kingdom of Syria, entered into a league with Hyrcanus the High-Priest who was engaged some time after in a war with Antiochus Gryphus, the son of Demetrius. It came to a battle, and Alexander was slain in the engagement.

Antiochus by this means came to be king of Syria; but durst not as yet make any attempt on the Jews, for he heard that Antiochus Cyzicenus was at that time levying an army against him in the town of Cyzicus. Wherefore, without attempting any thing against the Jews, he thought it most adviseable to keep himself upon his guard against his brother, who was called *Cyzicenus*, from the name of the place where he received his education.

Upon the coming of Antiochus Cyzicenus into Syria, the brethren were perpetually at war, and Hyrcanus consequently in possession of a profound peace; for, after the slaughter of Antiochus, he fell off from the Macedonians, and had no more concern with them, either as an ally, or subject.

In the days of Alexander Zebina, affairs prospered with Hyrcanus according to his utmost desire, and also

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in the reign of the two brothers: for while they were harassing one another, he enjoyed the revenues of Judea, whereby he amassed an inestimable treasure; for while Cyzicenus, ravaged the country, on one hand, and his brother had no relief out of Egypt on the other, he left them to themselves to harass one another, which tended ultimately to the establishment of his prosperity.

CHAP. VI.

HYRCANUS INVESTS SAMARIA, WHICH IS AFFLICTED BY A DREADFUL FAMINE. VARIOUS FORTUNES OF HYRCANUS AND ANTIOCHUS, WHO WAGE WAR AGAINST EACH OTHER. DEATH OF ANTIOCHUS. DESTRUCTION OF SAMARIA. HYRCANUS ESPOUSES THE PART OF THE SECT OF SADDUCES. PAYS THE DEBT OF NATURE. IS SUCCEEDED BY ANTIOCHUS, WHO CHANGES THE JEWISH GOVERNMENT, AND EVINCES A VERY PERVERSE AND IMPIOUS DISPOSITION. IS CHASTISED BY A VERY SORE JUDGMENT; AND, BEFORE HIS DEATH, CONFESSES HIS INIQUITOUS CONDUCT.

HYRCANUS, under these circumstances marched with an army to the strong city of Samaria; being so irritated against them by the indignities they had put upon the people of Marissa, who were inhabitants and allies of Judea, though subjected to the king of Syria, that he resolved to attack the place with all his vigour.

Upon sitting down before it, he surrounded the town with a large ditch, and a double wall of eighty furlongs compass, and gave the conduct of the siege to his sons *Antigonus* and *Ariſtobulus*, who carried it on with such vigour, and kept them in so close, that they were forced to the extremity of eating carrion: so that in the end they implored the assistance of Antiochus Cyzicenus, who came immediately; but being routed by Aristobulus, and pursued by him and his brother, as far as Scythopolis, he escaped with considerable loss.

The brethren, after this action, returned, and forced the people into the town again, renewed the siege, which produced a repeated application to the same Antiochus for succour, who prevailed with Ptolemy Lathurus for six thousand men; but the assistance was granted so much against his mother's approbation, that it had well nigh caused the loss of his kingdom.

With this band of Egyptians, Antiochus at first ravaged the country of Hyrcanus, who was not at that time in a condition to sustain his inroads. His design was, by this diversion, to draw him from the siege; but through surprizes, desertions, and other casualties, he found his party in a short time so weakened that he committed the charge of the Jewish war to *Callimunder* and *Epicrates*, and went off from thence himself to Tripoli.

Callimunder, after this, with more bravery than discretion, ventured upon a rash encounter, where his people were wholly cut off, and himself

himself slain. Epicrates, at the same time treacherously betrayed Scythopolis, and several other neighbouring towns, to the Jews, that there was no possibility of relieving the place.

Hyrcanus had been a full year before Samaria when he took it; nor was he content with reducing the city, without raizing the foundations; for he not only made it a heap of rubbish, but drew several trenches of water through it, which so disfigured the face of every thing, that there was not the least mark left of any building.

The Jews prospered at this juncture, not only at Jerusalem, but at Alexandria also, and the rest of Egypt, Cyprus, &c. For the queen Cleopatra, upon a difference with her son Ptolemy Lathur, committed the command of her troops to Chelcias and Ananias, the sons of that Onias who erected a temple in the territory of Heliopolis, after the platform of that of Jerusalem.

These two persons were the queen's directors in all she did, according to the testimony of *Strabo* the Cappidocian, who writes, to the following effect:

That many of those that either came formerly with them to Cyprus, or were sent thither afterward by Cleopatra, immediately quitted the queen's interest, and went over to Ptolemy; only the Jews that were of Onias's party, stood firm, out of a reverence they paid the queen for the respect she shewed to Chelcias and Ananias, their friends and countrymen.

The success of Hyrcanus drew upon him the envy of the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, who retained no extraordinary esteem for him before. The authority of that faction, was so sacred among the common people, that let them treat their king or their High-Priest, with the utmost indignity, the multitude would approve their proceedings.

Hyrcanus, however, having been trained up in that school, and looked upon as a person much in their favour, took occasion to invite them to an entertainment, where he treated them with all possible respect. As soon as their spirits were raised by good cheer, he addressed them in the following manner:

I need not tell you my worthy friends, that a man of your own principles desireth nothing more than to approve himself acceptable to God, and just to his neighbour, which is but according to your own doctrine; but if you shall find, that I have in any thing departed from my duty, as it is your part to admonish and instruct me, I shall account it mine to amend and reform.

This candid address was received with such applause, that Hyrcanus did not a little value himself upon the reputation he acquired thereby.

After a short pause, Eleazar, one of the guests, a malicious man, stood up, and thus addressed himself to Hyrcanus:

Since you are pleased to profess yourself so great a lover of truth and plain dealing, be so just also as to lay down your pontificate, and content yourself with your civil administration.

When he was demanded the cause

of this proposal, he replyed, *Becauſe we have been told by our Elders, that in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, your mother was a ſlave.*

The report was false, and so much the more offensive, as well to the Pharisees, as to Hyrcanus himself.

There happened to be in the company, one Jonathan, Hyrcanus's particular friend, but a Sadducee, and consequently a mortal enemy to the Pharisees. He insisted that the calumny of Eleazar was concerted, and that the Pharisees were privy to it; adding, that the same would appear, if Hyrcanus would refer to them what punishment they thought a man might deserve for so scandalous a defamation.

Hyrcanus put the question, to try how they stood affected; and whether or not they were privy to the affront. Their answer was (being men generally inclined to mercy in such cases) that they did not find defamation to be a capital crime, and therefore deemed whipping and imprisonment might serve for satisfaction.

This method of compromising the affair put Hyrcanus into a violent passion, and gave him to understand, that they had every one of them part in this infamous reflection upon his family. Jonathan, in this heat, embittered him against the Pharisees to such a degree, that he absolutely renounced the sect, and went over to the Sadducees; abrogating all their ordinances and constitutions, with a penalty upon those who should presume to observe them. This was it that put both himself and his sons quite out of credit with the common people, as it will be seen hereafter.

The remainder of Hyrcanus's life, after the quelling this sedition, was spent in peace, and he died in the year of his government thirty-one.

He left behind him five sons, and God was pleased to honour him with three eminent dignities; the civil government of the Jews, the priesthood, and the spirit of prophecy; foretelling, by a divine revelation, that his two eldest sons should not long enjoy the government after the death of their father, and its succeeding in the event.

On Hyrcanus's decease, his eldest son *Ariſtobulus* formed a resolution of new modelling the government, and changing the principality into an absolute monarchy, setting the crown accordingly upon his own head. This happened four hundred and eighty-one years and three months after the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon.

He had so great a regard for *Antigonus*, his next brother, that he associated him as a kind of a partner with him in the government. The other three he kept in prison, together with his mother, whom he looked upon as a rival, upon a pretence, that his father had left her at his death in possession of all he could confer upon her. So horrid and unnatural was his cruelty, that he starved his mother to death, and afterward, put his beloved brother to death, only upon wicked suggestions of malicious tongues.

These insinuations had no effect upon

upon him at first, through the prevalence of his affection for Antigonus, and a persuasion that they were the dictates of malice and envy; but happening to return from the army, on a certain occasion, in great pomp, just upon the solemnity of the feast of tabernacles, Aristobulus at the same time lying sick, his brother went up to the temple, with his guards about him, in great splendor, upon the business of religious worship, in order to offer up his prayers and vows for the health of his brother.

The fame of Antigonus and the magnificence of his retinue, furnished matter for a faction of sycophants and court parasites to work upon; so they went immediately to the king, with all the most virulent calumnies, saying:

This was not a behaviour that became the condition of a private man, but rather a moſt notorious evidence of a deſign upon the crown; intimating that the guards he had then about him, would in a ſhort time proceed, from this invaſion upon his royalty, to a violence upon his perſon; nor would he be ſo impolitic as to ſtop at part of the government, when he might obtain the whole.

Aristobulus was so divided between the fear of being too secure, or too credulous, that though he could not believe every thing that they told him, yet at the same time, suspected that it was founded on some just ground; and therefore resolved to provide for his safety, without giving any proof of jealousy.

In his apartment in the tower, since known by the name of *Antonia*, he posted a guard in a dark place under-ground, with particular orders, that they should watch his brother in his passage, and that if he came without arms, he should pass unmolested; but if he came armed they should kill him.

Aristobulus then sent for his brother to come to him, charging the messenger to bid him come unarmed; but the queen, and the rest of the conspirators, tampered with the messenger, and bade him tell Antigonus on the contrary, that his brother had heard of a very elegant suit of armour he had, and that he was desirous of seeing how it became him. As he depended upon the good faith of his brother, and suspected no treachery, he went immediately armed, just as the messenger found him. Upon his coming to the tower of Straton, the soldiers fell upon him in a dark passage and slew him.

This disaster may suffice to shew the force of envy and slander; and how the very best dispositions may be corrupted by those temptations.

But the most extraordinary circumstance was the prediction of one *Judas*, a famous prophet of those times. This Judas, upon the sight of Antigonus coming to the temple, broke out into exclamations among his Disciples, that he was now weary of his life; for that Antigonus, whose death he had presaged upon that very day at Straton's tower, was yet alive; the place six hundred furlongs off, and the day more than half spent; so that he had utterly lost the credit of a prophet for

for ever. While he was in this perplexity the news arrived of Antigonus's being slain in a subterranean passage under the tower *.

The conscious guilt of being accessary to his brother's death, inflamed his distemper to that degree, that it brought on a vomiting of blood; and as one of his servants was carrying part of it away in a bason, he stumbled upon the way, and spilt it upon the very blood of his master's brother.

This accident caused such an outcry, that Aristobulus overhearing it, could not rest till they told him the meaning of it; and the more unwilling they were of owning the truth, the more eager was he to know it, as men are naturally more curious in such cases. At length, through importunity and menace, he extorted it from them, and in the horrors of conscience thus expostulated with groans and tears:

The all-seeing eye of God hath found me out in my wickedness, and my brother's blood hath already brought down a vengeance upon me. How long shall this shameless carcase maintain a life so justly forfeited to the ashes of my dear mother and brother! Why do I not rather die once for all, than bleed to death thus drop by drop, as if my sufferings could be an atonement for the guilt of parricide! He had no sooner uttered these words than he gave up the ghost, having governed only one year, under the surname *Philellen*; that is to say, a lover of the Greeks.

He gained many advantages to his country; made way upon Iturea, and joined a considerable part of it to the territory of Judea, forcing the people, upon pain of banishment, to submit to circumcision, and live in a conformity to the other rites and practices of the Jews.

He was accounted otherwise a person of modesty and justice, as *Strabo* vouches for him, in these words:

He was a righteous man, and in many respects a friend to the Jews; for he enlarged their jurisdiction by annexing to it Iturea, uniting the people also into one common bond of circumcision.

* This was called *Straton's* tower, as well as that upon the coast, which was afterwards known by the name of *Cesarea*; and this set the prophet right again.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

SALOME RELEASES THE BROTHERS IMPRISONED BY ARISTOBULUS, AND PLACES THE ELDER UPON THE THRONE; WHO PUTS ONE OF HIS BROTHERS TO DEATH. DIVERS CONTESTS BETWEEN ALEXANDER AND PTOLEMY WITH VARIOUS SUCCESS. CLEOPATRA ESPOUSES THE CAUSE OF THE JEWS, WITH GREAT SUCCESS, AND AFTER THE DEATH OF PTOLEMY, ENTERS INTO AN ALLIANCE WITH ALEXANDER. HORRID MASSACRE BY THE JEWS. ALEXANDER, AFTER VARIOUS FORTUNES FALLS IN AN AMBUSH. A REBELLION ENSUES THAT PROVED VERY FATAL TO THE JEWS.

AFTER the death of *Ariſtobulus*, his wife *Salome*, (by the Greeks called *Alexandria*) set the brothers at liberty, whom her husband had made prisoners, and placed *Janneus*, otherwise called *Alexander*, upon the throne; the eldest, and the most moderate of three.

Alexander, therefore upon the death of Aristobulus, entered upon the administration; and taking off one of the brothers that would have supplanted him, provided for the other in the humble state of a private life.

As soon as he had settled the state, he marched with an army to Ptolemais, where he encountered a body of the enemy in the field; beat them into the town, and then shut them up in it. There was only this place and Gaza, of all the sea-coast towns that stood out, besides Dora, and the tower of Straton, in the hands of *Zoilus*.

As for Antiochus Philometor, and his brother Antiochus Cyzicenus, they were so engaged in a war one with another, that there was no hope of any relief to the people of Ptolemais from them.

The besieged, in fine, had no prospect of relief, but from Egypt, and especially from Ptolemy Lathur, who had been driven out of his kingdom by his mother Cleopatra, and was now withdrawn into Cyprus: so that they sent Ambassadors to Ptolemy to desire his aid against Alexander; not doubting, but that as soon as he should set foot in Syria, the people of Gaza, and Ptolemais would all declare in his favour; beside that, Zoilus, the Sidonians, and other people in those parts would certainly join him.

The king was so elevated with these assurances, that he set his people immediately upon equipping of a fleet for the expedition: but while they were thus employed, one *Demetrius*, a person of great credit with the citizens of Ptolemais, brought the people, to a better understanding of the matter, by reasoning with them about it after this manner:

The important point is this, whether you had not better ſtand to the fate of the war you are engaged in with the Jews, and venture an uncertain iſſue of it, than by calling in and delivering yourſelves up to the protection of a foreign power, incur a certain ſlavery; and not only become involved in a preſent broil, but run the riſque of a more dangerous incumbrance that threatens you from

Egypt; for you cannot think that Cleopatra will remain inactive and see Ptolemy form his troops; the queen will rather get beforehand with him, and have a potent army at his back, before he is ready for it; besides the hazard he runs of being driven out of Cyprus.

Besides, if Ptolemy should fail in his design, and be forced back to Cyprus, you will be exposed to the greatest dangers and difficulties.

This remonstrance dissuaded them from their design of the embassy, and Ptolemy was informed of the same upon his passage; however, since he was in motion, he continued his course to Sycamin, where he landed an army of about thirty thousand horse and foot, marched thence to Ptolemais, with an intent to send an embassy to the city; but when he found that they would neither regard his message, nor personal application, it greatly perplexed him, and while he was involved in this dilemma, Zoilus and some deputies from Gaza arrived, to implore his assistance against the Jews and Alexander, that were making havock in their country.

Alexander, upon this, was forced to raise the siege: and when he found that nothing was to be effected by force, he had recourse to stratagem. He privately treated with Cleopatra against Ptolemy, and at the same time kept fair with Ptolemy, under the countenance of a friend and an ally; proposing to give him four hundred talents of silver, upon condition of delivering up the usurper Zoilus into his hands, and restoring to the Jews their lands which he had in possession.

Ptolemy, without hesitation, embraced the friendship of Alexander, and seized upon Zoilus; but being informed, that there was an intrigue carried on between Alexander and Cleopatra, he looked upon the league as violated, and laid siege to Ptolemais, where the gates were shut against him. Upon this he divided his army, leaving one part of it before the town to carry on the siege, and marching off with the remainder of it himself, to destroy the country of Judea.

Alexander, on the other hand, to recounter this design of Ptolemy levied a formidable army of his own people; and advanced with it against the enemy. Ptolemy, in the mean time taking the advantage of a sabbath day, fell upon Asochis, a city of Galilee, and took it by assault with about ten thousand prisoners, and a vast booty.

After the taking of Asochis, Ptolemy attacked Sepphoris, an adjacent place, where he was repulsed witha considerable loss, and from thence marched directly to hazard an engagement with Alexander, whom he found near the river Jordan, and encamped over-against the enemy. Alexander had in his van eight thousand of those they call Hacatontomachi, armed with brazen bucklers, and Ptolemy's men in the front had the same sort of shields; but the generality of his people not being so well armed as their adversaries, were not very desirous of engaging, till one

one *Philoſtephanus*, a gallant and experienced officer who had the conduct of them, led them on and encouraged them to sustain the encounter. The first word of command was to pass the river that parted the two armies; which Alexander did not oppose, in confidence of obtaining the victory, if he could but engage the enemy with the river behind them to cut off their retreat. When it came to the point, the fortune of the battle was doubtful, and it was maintained with great loss on both sides, for some time; when one of Ptolemy's divisions giving way, the victory seemed to incline to Alexander; but Phylostephanus coming up to their relief with a seasonable reinforcement, that wing of the Jews was overpowered by numbers, and broken; and no succour appearing, they were forced to flight, and the whole field followed their example; Ptolemy's men pursuing them with great slaughter.

According to some historians, Alexander lost in this battle and pursuit no less than fifty thousand men.

After this bloody victory, Ptolemy, in the evening, went into some of the Jews villages and habitations, and finding them crowded with women and children, ordered his soldiers to cut their throats, promiscuously, and hew them into quarters, and boil them, as a terror to those that escaped from the battle, when they should find themselves fallen into the hands of an enemy that lived upon human flesh.

Cleopatra, alarmed at the growing power of her son, who had reduced Gaza, and laid waste the land of Judea, thought it necessary to curb his ambition, especially as he was come to the gates of Egypt, with a design upon the kingdom. Therefore she mustered, without delay, her utmost forces, naval and military, constituting Chelcias and Ananias, two Jews, generals.

She sent the greatest part of her treasure, with her grand-children, and her last will and testament into the isle of *Coas;* and ordered her son Alexander with a powerful army into Phenice, to keep that province in obedience, while she herself went to Ptolemais; and being refused admittance, ordered an assault to be made upon the town, Ptolemy, upon this, quitted Syria, and hastened away into Egypt, flattering himself, that his unexpected arrival in the queen's absence would tend to his success; but Cleopatra was prepared for him, though she had the misfortune at this time to lose Chelcias, one of her generals, as he was in the pursuit of Ptolemy in Celo-Syria.

Upon Ptolemy's miscarriage in this attempt upon Egypt, the queen sent a strong detachment after him, that drove him quite out of his country, a second time, and forced him to take up his winter-quarters in Gaza. She herself in the mean time, taking the city and garrison of Ptolemais by assault, where complimentary honours mutually passed between the queen and Alexander, and Cleopatra was particularly saluted for her generous assistance of an unfortunate prince under the persecution and oppression of a common enemy.

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Some of the queen's friends persuaded her to pursue different measures, suggesting to her, the expediency of availing herself of this opportunity to seize Alexander, as it was highly impolitic to leave such a number of Jews under the command of one man. But Ananias loudly exclaimed against the unreasonableness of such a proceeding, as highly injurious to all the ties of hospitality and common faith; especially to a friend and a kinsman, under so sacred a trust; alledging moreover, that one such act of injustice would turn against her the hearts of all honest Jews upon the face of the earth. The queen was so well pleased with the honest simplicity of Ananias, that she did not only treat Alexander with lenity, but renewed a league of friendship with him, at Scythopolis, a city of Celo-Syria.

No sooner was Alexander free from the power of Ptolemy, than he undertook an expedition into Celo-Syria; where, after a siege of ten months, he took Gadara, and after that, Amathus the strongest fort upon the river Jordan, and the place where Theodorus the son of Zoon, in an outrage of revenge, fell upon the Jews by surprize, cut off ten thousand of their men, and took Alexander's baggage: but this unexpected disaster did not divert the king from his design upon Raphia, a sea-coast town, and Anthedon, which was afterwards by Herod, called Agrippiades; both which he reduced by force.

Ptolemy had by this time left Gaza, and betaken himself into Cyprus, his mother Cleopatra also being returned to Egypt, so that Alexander took this occasion of revenging himself upon the people of Gaza, for calling in Ptolemy to their succour against him, laid siege to the town, and at the same time ravaged their country.

While Alexander was before the place, Apollodotus their commander made a resolute sally in the night with two thousand mercenaries, and ten thousand of the citizens well armed upon the camp of the Jews; and as long as it was dark, the besiegers had success, upon an apprehension of Ptolemy's being come up with relief, but no soouer did the day break than the Jews rallied, and so furiously charged the garrison, that they destroyed a thousand of their men; but the courage of these people was proof sill against all the difficulties of number, force, nay, famine itself; being resolved rather to abide all extremities, than shrink, or yield to an enemy.

And as a further encouragement, they were animated by Aretas an Arabian king, with the promise of a timely succour. But all this availed nothing, for before any supply could be brought, Apollodotus was killed, and the town taken. This Apollodotus was murdered by Lysimachus, his own brother, from an ignoble motive of envy for the reputation he had gained among the people.

After the fact, he assembled a party, and delivered up the city to Alexander. This prince, upon his first entrance, behaved himself with moderation, but this disposition did not long prevail, for soon after he permitted his soldiers to kill, burn, and destroy

destroy at pleasure. This licence they extended to an absolute massacre, though it cost them dear enough; for there died as many of the Jews, as of the townsmen.

Some, to anticipate the fury of the enemy, set fire to their own houses, others laid violent hands upon their very wives and children, chusing rather to have them die free, than live slaves.

The magistracy happened to be in council, when these barbarous troops came into the city, and the senators, to the number of five hundred, fled immediately to the temple of Apollo for sanctuary; but they were all slaughtered to a man, the town sacked and levelled; and Alexander, after a year spent before it, returned to Jerusalem.

While Antiochus Cyzicenus, was in possession of the government of Syria, there was another Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, who made war upon him, wherein he lost his life and his army; after which his brother Philip took the crown to himself, and governed part of Syria. Ptolemy Lathur, upon this sent for his fourth brother Demetrius Eucerus, to Gnidus, whom he constituted king of Damascus. Antiochus for the time he lived, made a stout resistance against his brothers; but being called soon after to the assistance of Laodice, the queen of the Galadenes, who was then at war with the Parthians, he was slain in the field with his sword in his hand, behaving himself like a man of honour and resolution; and after his death the government of Syria descended to his two brothers, Philip and Demetrius.

About this time there broke out a rebellion, which continued six years, and cost the Jews no less than fifty thousand lives.

The king was weary of the war, sought for a reconciliation, but could not effect it: and such was the aversion of the people to his government, that when he enquired of them what he should do to appease them, they unanimously desired him to cut his own throat; and thereupon invited Demetrius Eucerus, to their aid.

CHAP. VIII.

VARIOUS CONTESTS BETWEEN DEMETRIUS AND ALEXANDER. HORRIBLE INSTANCE OF CRUELTY IN THE LATTER. DEATH OF DEMETRIUS AND ALEXANDER. LAMENTATION OF HIS QUEEN. STATE OF JUDEA UNDER HER GOVERNMENT. SECT OF THE PHARISEES RULE IN HER NAME. DIVERS TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN ALEXANDRA AND OTHER PERSONS. ARISTOBULUS, HER SON, ENDEAVOURS TO SUPPLANT HER. HER DEATH AND CHARACTER.

Demetrius Eucerus, in conjunction with those who invited him, marched to their assistance with an army of three thousand horse, and forty thousand foot, and encamped near Sichem, where Alexander, with about six thousand and two hundred foreign mercenaries, and twenty thousand of his own faction, went out to meet him.

The armies being drawn up, a bloody battle ensued, in which Demetrius obtained the victory, so that Alexander was forced to fly to the mountains for refuge; where, by a strange turn of compassion for his misfortune, six thousand Jews came up and joined him.

Demetrius, alarmed at this sudden reinforcement, withdrew his army and retired; but the Jews maintained their ground, and carried on the war against Alexander, by dint of their own resolution and credit; notwithstanding they were perpetually baffled and cut to pieces whenever they engaged.

They were compelled at length with the best of their men to betake themselves to Bethama for protection, where Alexander shut them up; and taking the town, carried the people prisoners to Jerusalem, where he committed the most excreable barbarities.

As he was feasting with his concubines, in a turret that commanded a large prospect, he made it part of his entertainment, to treat his company with the spectacle of hanging eight hundred Jews, with their wives and children and cutting the throats of each other while living.

This barbarity rendered Alexander so detestable, that the Jews gave him the appellation of Thracidas. * There were about eight thousand of the army that escaped by night, and spent their days afterward in a kind of banishment, during his life.

Demetrius being advanced to Berea, and laid siege to that place, was so powerfully opposed, that he was compelled to surrender, and afterward sent to Mithridates, the king of Parthia, who treated him with great respect, till the time of his death, which happened shortly after his late defeat.

Alexander addicted himself toward the end of his reign to intemperance and debauchery of every kind, which brought on a quartan ague that continued three years; but at the same time he attended to the business of state, insomuch that through the pressure of his disorder, and the fatigue of government, he expired at the close of that term, upon the frontiers of the garrisons, at the siege of the castle of Ragaba, on the farther side of the river Jordan.

When queen Alexandra found him reduced to the last extremety, she lamented the fate of herself and children in terms to this effect:

"Alas! my dear Lord, what will become of your wife and children, without one friend in the world, and left exposed to your mortal enemies."

Alexander, in consequence of this lamentation, thus advised her:

"If you would be safe and happy when I am dead, and quietly succeed to the government, follow my counsel.

"In the first place, keep my death concealed from the soldiers, till the castle is taken, and then triumphantly go to Jerusalem with the news of it.

* Because the Thracians were remarkable cruel and bloody in their natural dispositions, as appears from Thucydides and many other historians.

Make

Make your court to the Pharisees; for your character will rise or fall, according to their opinion of you. I speak this by experience; for it has been my moroseness toward that sect, that has turned the hearts of the whole nation against me. Therefore when you come to Jerusalem, send for some of the leading men of that sect, and lay before them, that out of the reverence you have for their generosity, piety, and justice, you do now deliver up the body to be disposed of as to their wisdom shall seem meet; assuring them that you shall ever resign yourself to their authority, not only in this, but in all other matters of a public nature.

"Follow these measures, and depend upon it there will be a care taken for an honourable and magnificent funeral, and for the settling of yourself and children in the exercise of your lawful power.

"Let them have the rule over you, and it will be their concern to establish you in a peacable rule over others."

As soon as he had given this advice to his wife he expired, in the nine and fortieth year of his age, and the twenty-seventh of his reign.

As soon as the castle was taken, *Alexandra* applied herself to the Pharisees, according to her husband's directions, leaving the body, and the concerns of the government, to their disposal. By this means the Pharisees, who before had been her greatest enemies became her greatest friends; harranguing the people on the glorious exploits of Alexander, the irreparable loss of so just a prince; and by these rhetorical strokes raised the passions of the multitude to such a pitch of sorrow, that they thought him worthy of a funeral solemnity beyond his predecessors.

So great was the power and influence of the Pharisees, that the queen might be said meerly to execute their orders. She appointed the rivival of the Pharisaical ordinances and traditions, which her father-in-law had abolished; and every thing was transacted in the queen's name by their power.

In some few cases, indeed she acted by her own proper authority; for instance, she kept a mercenary army in pay, and augmented her forces to such a degree, that the kings, her neighbours, stood in awe of her, as appeared by the security they gave her as hostages for their good behaviour. Her reign, would have been quiet and easy had she not frequently been embroiled at the instigation of this turbulent sect, when they pressed her for justice upon those that advised the death of the eight hundred persons that were cruelly massacred.

She was so wrought upon by their remonstrances and expostulations, that she put the malecontents in possession of strong holds and garrisons, upon condition that Hyrcania Alexandrias, and Macherus, where she deposited her jewels, treasure, and rich goods, might be freed from their jurisdictions.

She sent her son Aristobulus, with an army toward Damascus against Ptolemy;

Ptolemy; but he returned soon after from that expedition, without doing any thing of moment.

While things were in this posture, a report arrived, that *Tigranes*, king of Armenia, was advanced into Syria, with an army of five hundred thousand men, with a design to march suddenly into Judea.

Alexandra was so alarmed at this intelligence, that she sent ambassadors with presents to Tigranes, who was at that time before Ptolemais.

The queen Selene, otherwise called Cleopatra, who then held the government of Syria, animated her subjects to stand upon their guard, and oppose Tigrane's entrance into the country.

The ambassadors acquitted themselves so well toward the king on the behalf of Alexandra, and the whole nation of the Jews, that with great instances of respect to the embassy, he gave them assurance of all good offices in return. In short, he took Ptolemais, and was no sooner master of it, than word was brought him of the rout of *Mithridates* by *Lucullus*, the escape upon pursuit into Iberia; and that when Lucullus saw he could not overtake him, he struck off into Armenia, where he was at that time ravaging the country. Upon this intelligence, Tigranes immediately marched off with his army, and returned home.

The queen Alexandra, some time after this, fell dangerously sick, which gave Aristobulus a fair opportunity of accomplishing his design, so that slipping out in the night, attended only by one servant, he arrived privately at the forts and castles, where his father's friends were in garrison. He had been a long time dissatisfied with his mother's government; but considering her present indisposition, and the danger of the whole family's lying at the mercy of the Pharisees, in case of her death, (Hyrcanus the next in succession, being utterly unqualified for the exercise of any public charge) he found himself extremely embarrassed under these circumstances.

No mortal being privy to his design, but his own wife, whom he left at Jerusalem with his children, he went to Agada, where he was very generously entertained by *Galeſtes*, a person of eminence.

Alexandra missed him the very day after his departure, but did not suspect his intent, till she came to understand by one messenger after another, of the surrender of divers fortresses to him.

This turn of affairs, put the queen and the people into great confusion, who in order to prevent his design, determined to secure his wife and children under a guard in the citadel, near the temple.

However, in the space of fifteen days, he made himself master of two and twenty castles. And when he had thus secured himself, he collected an army from mount Libanus, Trachonitus, and the princes thereabouts, who were forward enough to assist the stronger side, from a prospect of the advantages they might reasonably expect for the service of raising a new king to the throne.

Upon this situation of affairs, Hyrcanus,

canus, and the elders of the Jews, applied themselves to the queen for advice and direction, they informed her that Aristobulus was now possessed of great power, that they found her, to their great grief, in extremity; but as long as she lived they could do nothing without her acquiescence, even though they saw themselves upon the very brink of ruin.

The queen replyed, that not being in a condition to undertake the affairs of government, she had laid all those cares aside, and transferred them wholly on their wise sect, who had the means of defence in their own hands, the strength of the nation entire, and wanted neither men nor money. Soon after this address she died, in the ninth year of her reign, and the seventy-third of her life.

This princess, though extremely ambitious in her disposition, evinced an extraordinary concern for the due regulation of her government, to which she attended as the main object of her pursuit.

She was no less eminent for her moderation, integrity and justice, and upon the whole, may be transmitted to posterity, as a character, in divers instances, worthy of imitation.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK X.

CHAP. I.

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ARISTOBULUS, AND HYRCANUS PRODUCES TERMS OF ACCOMMODATION. ARISTOBULUS IS BESIEGED IN THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM BY ARETAS. THE JEWS RETIRE INTO EGYPT. STONING OF ONIAS. DIVINE JUDGMENTS INFLICTED ON THE PEOPLE FOR THIS MURDER, TOGETHER WITH THEIR PERFIDITY AND SACRILEGE. ARISTOBULUS COMPELS ARETAS TO QUIT THE SIEGE. ARETAS AND HYRCANUS SUSTAIN AN ENTIRE DEFEAT. POMPEY MARCHES AGAINST ARISTOBULUS, WHO HAVING DELIVERED UP HIS CASTLES RETIRES IN DISGUST TO JERUSALEM, WHITHER POMPEY ADVANCES, AND BESIEGES THAT CITY. JERUSALEM DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTIES. THE TEMPLE IS TAKEN BY ASSAULT. MODERATION OF THE CONQUEROR. THE CITY MADE TRIBUTARY. ARISTOBULUS CARRIED PRISONER TO ROME.

IT was in the third year of the Olympiad one hundred and seventy-seven, Hyrcanus took upon himself the pontificate, and Aristobulus immediately made war upon him. They engaged at Jericho, and many of Hyrcanus's soldiers deserted, and went over to his brother; himself being driven into the citadel, where the wife and children of Aristobulus were kept prisoners, by the orders and direction of his mother; and the remainder of the faction took sanctuary for a time within the verge of the temple, but surrendered themselves soon after.

In process of time, their enmity subsided, and the brothers came to an accommodation, on condition that Aristobulus should be established in the possession of the government, and Hyrcanus be allowed to live private upon his own fortune, without molestation. This contract was signed and ratified in the temple, with the usual formalities, after which the brothers departed in perfect amity to their respective places of residence.

In consequence of an agreement between Hyrcanus and an eastern prince

prince called *Aretas*, who kept his court at a place called Petra; the latter advanced against Aristobulus with an army of fifty thousand horse and foot; fought, and overcame him; insomuch, that finding himself abandoned by his soldiers going over to Hyrcanus, he was forced to fly for refuge to Jerusalem; where Aretas, with his whole army attacked him in the very temple; the people unanimously joining with Hyrcanus against Aristobulus, the priests only excepted.

Aretas, on the other hand, with his Jews, as well as Arabians, carried on the assault with the utmost vigour. While this transaction was in hand, the feast of unleavened bread coming on, which the Jews call the Paschal, their principal leaders withdrew themselves out of the country, and went into Egypt; at which time, one *Onias*, a righteous man apprehending the approach of a civil war, retired and concealed himself.

The Jews reflecting upon the piety of this man, and that he had obtained rain from God in an extreme drought, brought him out into the camp, and there requested of him, that as he had formerly delivered them from the judgment of a famine, he would now relieve them from a most destructive war, by denouncing a curse upon Aristobulus and his whole faction. He refused compliance a considerable time, till at length being overruled by the multitude, he stood up in the midst of them, and delivered an ejaculatory prayer to this purpose; "Lord, thou art the king of kings; and since both we who stand here before thee are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple, are thy Priests, I do humbly beseech thee not to hear the prayer of either of them one against the other."

Upon these words, some of the Jewish rabble that stood by, stoned him to death. This barbarity was followed immediately by a divine judgment, which thus avenged the murder of Onias. While Aristobulus with the Priests were thus beset in the temple, the Paschal festival came on; at which time, according to custom, the Jews offered up a number of sacrifices; but the besieged, not having so many as they had occasion for, desired their brethren to supply them at their own price; upon which they agreed at one thousand drachmas each beast, and the money to be paid down on delivery.

Aristobulus and the Priests agreed to the conditions, and let down the money with a rope from the temple wall. When the besiegers had the money, they refused to deliver the victims; and such was their impiety, that they did not only break faith with men, but sacrilegiously robbed God himself of a service that was dedicated to his honour.

The Priests upon this perfidy, imposed upon them under the name of an agreement, joined in a prayer to God, that the iniquity might not escape unpunished. Their prayers were heard, and the judgment not long deferred; for there arose immediately a violent tempest, that destroyed all the fruits of the earth through

through the whole province; so that one measure of wheat was sold for fifteen drachmas.

Pompey was at this time detained in Armenia, by a war he maintained there with Tigranes; but in this interim he sent *Scaurus* into Syria. As he was upon the way, there came ambassadors from Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, soliciting an alliance offensive and defensive. Aristobulus offered four hundred talents, and Hyrcanus the same consideration. Scaurus inclined rather to Aristobulus, as the most generous of the two, and accepted his money, and ordered Aretas to withdraw, upon the peril of being accounted an enemy to the Roman people.

Scaurus, after this, went to Damascus, and Aristobulus advanced with a mighty army against Aretas and Hyrcanus; and engaging them in a place called Papyron, gave them an overthrow, with the loss of about seven thousand of the enemy.

Pompey, incensed, at the arrogant behaviour of Aristobulus, advanced against him at the head of a formidable army, and receiving intelligence, that he had retreated to a mountain in the heart of Judea, sent him a summons to come down and speak with him. Aristobulus obeyed the summons, and there passed some discourse between them, concerning the two brothers; after which Aristobulus, with Pompey's leave, returned to the castle.

This intercourse he repeated in order to maintain good terms with Pompey, as the most likely way to compass his end: but this did not hinder him from putting himself into a posture of defence in case of an attack. Pompey, at length, ordered him to deliver up all the castles that he was master of, and to signify his will and pleasure to the governors under his own hand, that there might be no plea for compliance with his order.

Aristobulus did as he was ordered, but resented it so heinously, that he went forthwith to Jerusalem, to make preparations for carrying on a war.

Pompey having refreshed his people, advanced toward Jerusalem, whilst Aristobulus, by this time repented of what he had done, and went out to meet him with an offering of a sum of money, and the command of the town, for desisting from hostilities. Pompey accepted his proposals, and sent *Gabinius* with a body of men into the city to receive the money; but this was meer illusion, for the gates were shut against him and he came back as he went out; the fault being laid upon the soldiers that would not stand to the argument. Pompey was so incensed at this insult, that he kept a stricter guard upon Aristobulus, and went himself to Jerusalem, determined on the conquest of that famous and well fortified city.

While Pompey was before the town, the citizens were divided concerning the manner in which they should act in this critical juncture: some were for yielding; others for holding out, and preparing for a war; especially as Aristobulus was kept a prisoner. Thus divided, one party

party took possession of the temple, and broke down the bridge between that and the city; while the other not only gave entrance to the army, but delivered up both city and palace into the hands of Pompey; who presently sent *Piso* his lieutenant, with part of his army to take charge of both. When things were come to this pass, Pompey made them a proposal of peace; but upon their refusal to treat, provided for an assault; Hyrcanus supplying him with all necessary assistance.

The north side of the temple being the weakest part, Pompey proposed to begin his attack in that quarter. It was encompassed with high towers, and surrounded with a wide and deep ditch. The city side, toward Pompey's station was impassable, for rocks and precipices; but the Romans, with infinite labour and difficulty, filled up the ditch with timber, and other materials, and raised platforms and ramparts to such a prodigious height, that with engines of battery which they brought from Tyre, they bombarded the temple-wall; yet if it had not been for the advantage they took of the sabbath, the Romans would not have gained their point, but with extreme danger and labour.

When the Romans understood the regard they paid to their sabbath, and observed that they made no opposition to the advancing of their bulwarks, and the fixing of their machines, they employed the sabbath in preparation for the action of the next day, without attempting any violence upon the present. This temple however, was taken upon a fasting-day, in the third month of the siege; *Caius*, *Antonius* and *Marcus Tullius Cicero*, being consuls.

Upon the enemies forcing the place, they put every man to death, nor was this cruelty sufficient to deter the Priests from prosecuting the duties of their function, accounting it less evil to fall into the hands of an unmerciful enemy, than to abandon their holy profession, or fail in the least point of obedience to their religious rites and ceremonies.

The enemy plied their engines upon the great tower, till by dint of repeated batteries they shook it to pieces, and brought it down to the ground, carrying away a great part of the next wall along with it in the ruins. This breach was no sooner made, than the enemy pressed in great numbers into the temple. Thus was this sacred place taken by assault, and from a scene of worship converted into a scene of blood, being strewed with dead bodies, some killed by the Romans, others by consent, dispatching one another; some again casting themselves down headlong from the walls, and others setting fire to the houses over their heads, rather than be spectators of the barbarities that were committed. There were slain about twelve thousand Jews, but not many Romans.

Absalom, the uncle, and the father-in-law of Aristobulus, was taken prisoner. The outrages were attended with many violations of the sacred rites of religion; but Pompey and his train behaved with great moderation;

deration; and the conqueror not only abstained from touching any of the holy things, but ordered the officers of the temple next day to purge the place, and to offer sacrifices according to their own customs and ordinances.

He restored Hyrcanus to the pontificate, partly for the good offices he had received from him, and partly for the service he had done him in hindering the Jews from taking up arms for Aristobulus. He rendered Jerusalem tributary to the Romans, and reduced all the places that the Jews possessed in Celo-Syria to their allegiance, confining that populous and powerful nation within the compass of their ancient bounds.

From this period we may justly date the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subjection of the Jewish nation to the Roman yoke, having been compelled to restore to the Syrians what they had taken in the course of a war with them, as well as submit to the transferment of the sovereign authority for the order of the pontificate, to the promiscuous herd of the common people.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

JUDEA HAVING BEEN RENDERED TRIBUTARY TO THE ROMANS, THEY SEND GABINIUS TO CHECK THE INCURSIONS OF ALEXANDER, SON OF ARISTOBULUS. HE RESTORES HYRCANUS TO THE PONTIFICATE, AND MAKES SOME PONTIFICAL REGULATIONS. SUCCEEDS IN HIS EXPEDITION, AND RETURNS TO ROME. CRASSUS IS SENT TO JUDEA. RIFLES THE TEMPLE. ARISTOBULUS POISONED, AND ALEXANDER BEHEADED. CÆSAR HAVING OVERCOME THE FACTION OF POMPEY, FAVOURS THE INTEREST OF HYRCANUS AND ANTIPATER. PERMITS THEM TO REBUILD JERUSALEM. A LEAGUE FORMED BETWEEN ATHENS AND JUDEA. ALSO BETWEEN THE ROMAN SENATE, AND THE JEWS.

JUDEA, through the success of Pompey, becoming subject to the Roman power; and being harrassed by the inroads of Alexander, the son of Aristobulus; Gabinus was sent to repel his invasions, which having speedily affected, he caused Hyrcanus to be brought to Jerusalem, and restored to the office and exercise of his priesthood.

There were then constituted five courts of justice, and a division was made of the whole province into five equal parts; so that some repaired for judicial decision to Jerusalem, others to Gadara, and others also to Amathus, Jericho, or Saphora, which is a city of Galilee. They were by this means delivered from the tyranny

ranny they complained of, and restored to the form of an Aristocracy.

This general, after a series of conquests over Aristobulus and Alexander, returned to Rome, and was succeeded in his commission by *Craſſus*, who treated not the Jews with the lenity of his predecessor; for being engaged in making preparation for a war with the Parthians, when he arrived in Judea, he seized not only the two thousand talents that Pompey had spared, but pillaged the temple of gold to the value of eight thousand talents more. He carried away with him also a wedge of gold of three hundred Minas*, each Mina being computed at two pounds and an half.

The prodigious mass of money that was deposited in this temple, was the acquisition of a long course of time, and collected from all quarters of the world, wherever the worship of the true God was known.

When Crassus had thus rifled the temple of Judea from top to bottom, he advanced against the Parthians, and gave them battle, where being cut off, together with his whole army, he retreated into Syria, where he stopped the progress of the Parthians, that were grown insolent upon their success. He went afterward to Tyre, and so to Judea, where he took Taricheæ by assault, and thirty thousand prisoners; and amongst the rest Pitholaus, Aristobulus's friend, whom he caused to be put to death by the advice of *Antipater*, a person of very considerable influence with the Idumeans, upon the account of a marriage with an Arabian lady of an illustrious extraction, called *Cypron*, by whom he had four sons, *Phaſael* and *Herod*, (afterwards king,) *Joſeph* and *Pheroras*, and an only daughter named *Salome*.

Antipater by his generosity and affability had acquired universal esteem amongst the neighbouring princes and potentates, and contributed not a little towards reconciling the Romans to the Jewish state and nation.

When *Cæſar's* party had prevailed, and he consequently became master of Rome; Aristobulus, having been released by the conqueror, was dispatched into Syria, with the command of two legions to keep that province in order. But the happiness he promised himself in the honour of being Cæsar's favourite was not of long duration; for Pompey's faction found means in a short time to dispatch him by poison, and the Cesareans took care of the funeral. His body lay embalmed a long time, till *Anthony* sent it into Judea, to be interred among their kings.

Scipio caused the head of Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, to be cut off by order of Pompey, for former seditious practices against the Romans, and the command was executed at Antioch.

* An Hebrew Mina of gold, according to Calmet's tables, weighed one pound, one ounce, thirteen penny weights, eighteen grains, and in value amounted to fifty four pounds fifteen shillings; three hundred therefore must weigh no more than three hundred and forty two ounces; five penny weights; and their value amount only to sixteen thousand four hundred and twenty five pounds English money.

Hyrcanus

Hyrcanus and Antipater, who now acted conjunctively in the cause of the Jews, exerted themselves with such vigour and resolution, that when Cæsar arrived in Syria, he conferred the pontificate on the former, and made the other a freeman of Rome, vesting him with all the privileges of that city.

About this time Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus came with a complaint to Cæsar, that his father had been poisoned by a faction, for bearing arms in his service, and that his brother had his head taken off at Scipio's instigation; setting forth how he was disinherited and ejected, and presented himself as an object of his compassion. He reflected also upon Hyrcanus and Antipater, as usurpers: but Antipater, being then present, wiped off these reproaches, by exposing the turbulent and seditious humour of Antigonus, and how busy he was in all factious cabels, not forgetting to remind Cæsar of his own services, appealing to the proofs he had given of his disposition and integrity.

Cæsar in fine, upon a full hearing of his representation, pronounced Hyrcanus to be High-Priest, gave Antipater his choice of any command, and conferred upon him the lieutenancy of Judea.

The walls of Jerusalem lying at this time in ruin, as they were left upon Pompey's demolishing them, Hyrcanus requested Cæsar for permission to rebuild them; and his request was immediately granted with all the forms of respect, and letters dispatched to the consuls at Rome, for the entering of the resolution in the records of the capital; the copy of the decree running as follows:

A DECREE OF THE SENATE ASSEMBLED IN THE TEMPLE OF CONCORD, ON THE 15th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, PRESENT L. COPONIUS, AND CAIUS PARIMUS QUIRINUS.

WHEREAS it appeareth unto this ſenate, upon the report of Valerius, the ſon of Lucius, Prætor, that it is requeſted and propoſed by Alexander, the ſon of Dorotheus, ambaſſadors on the behalf of the Jews, good men, and our faithful allies, that the antient league of friendſhip may be renewed between us; and that in token of their gratitude, they have brought a preſent of a golden cup and buckler, valued at ſixty thouſand crowns.

Alſo deſiring letters of recommendation to all governors and free towns for a paſſage, both by ſea and land, through all their ports and territories.

Be it therefore ordered by this ſenate, that the ſame league of friendſhip and ſociety be renewed and eſtabliſhed, all the deſires of the ſaid ambaſſadors agreed unto and granted, and their preſents accepted.

This was in the ninth year of the pontificate and principality of Hyrcanus, and in the month of Panemus.

This prince of the Jews had great honour done him alſo by the republic of Athens, in acknowledgment of their obligations to him; for they ſent

ſent him a decree to the following purpoſe:

A DECREE OF THE ATHENIANS, BEARING DATE THE 25 OF PANEMUS.

FOraſmuch as Hyrcanus, the ſon of Alexander, and the High-Prieſt and prince of the Jews, hath upon all occaſions, both public and private, as well in the generous reception, entertainment, and accommodation of our Ambaſſadors, as otherwiſe, giving proof of a ſingular affection and eſteem, both for our nation in general, and the citizens of Athens in particular, whereof we have received many inſtances.

And foraſmuch as we have received credible information from Theodoſius, of the virtue of the ſaid excellent prince, and of his friendly diſpoſition to do us all the good offices in his power, we have reſolved to preſent him with the honorary acknowledgment of a crown of gold, and to erect a brazen ſtatue to him in the temple of the people and the graces, for the fame of his memory; and to have it notified by proclamation at the exhibiting of any new ſhew, in all the theatres and places of public exerciſe, and ſpectacles in honour of Bacchus, Minerva, Ceres, &c. that we have preſented him with this crown out of a veneration for his virtue.

And we do farther require of all our governors and magiſtrates to be aiding and aſſiſting in the effectual improvement of theſe our conceſſions to the beſt advantage of our friends and aſſociates, ſo long as this amity ſhall continue between us; for the manifeſtation of our gratitude, piety, and juſtice toward all men of worth and honour, and the encouraging of good offices and inclinations toward us for the future.

We do likewiſe order, that a fit choice be forthwith made of ambaſſadors from among the Athenians, to attend Hyrcanus in our name, and with this our decree and preſents; and to provoke an emulation to out do us in this generous way of competition.

So far may ſuffice for the intercourſe of friendſhip that paſſed between the Romans and the Athenians with Hyrcanus.

When Cæſar had ſettled his affairs in Syria, he returned with his navy, accompanied by Antipater, who immediately upon his return to Jeruſalem, gave orders for the repairing of the walls that Pompey had thrown down; taking a tour at the ſame time throughout the province, to promote order and decorum.

He laid before them the bleſſings of a dutiful obedience to their prince, in the peaceable enjoyment of their liberties and poſſeſſions, and the dangerous conſequences of ſedious practices and innovations, which would force governors to turn perſecutors, Hyrcanus to turn tyrant, and the moſt neceſſary of their patrons and allies, even the Cæſars, and the ſenate of Rome, to become their implacable enemies.

With theſe admonitions he diſpoſed the whole country to peace and quiet.

CHAP. III.

ANTIPATER EFFECTS THE PREFERMENT OF HIS SONS, PHASAEL AND HEROD. IS EMBROILED THROUGH THE AMBITION OF HEROD, WHO IS CITED BEFORE THE JUDGES. BOLD ADDRESS OF SIMEAS UPON THE OCCASION. INSOLENCE OF HEROD TOWARD HYRCANUS. DIVERS PROCLAMATIONS IN FAVOUR OF THE JEWS.

ANTIPATER in this state of elevation, availed himself of the inactivity of Hyrcanus, to aggrandize his own family, by putting his two eldest sons Phasael and Herod into two eminent commands, appointing the former that of Jerusalem, with the adjacent country; and conferring on Herod, his second son, the government of Galilee.

Herod, though at that time but fifteen years of age, was of a pregnant genius, and enterprizing spirit, and shewed what might one day be expected from him.

The borders of Syria were in those days very much infested with robbers; so that the first instance of his prowess was upon a vagabond troop of free-booters, wherein he took *Ezekiah*, their commander, prisoner, with several of his companions, and put them to death.

This action gained him such reputation, that his name was celebrated through all the towns and villages, as their deliverer, and the author of their security and repose, for by the fame of this exploit, he became also known to *Sextus*, the kinsman of Cesar the great, who had then the administration of Syria. Beside, it kindled an emulation in Phasael likewise, to imitate the example of his brother, who applyed himself to the arts of popularity, as the most probable way for the compassing of his end.

The power and influence of Antipater created him many enemies among the leading men of the Jews; several of whom endeavoured to traduce his character, and bring upon him the popular odium, by insinuating, that he had embezzled considerable sums, which he received from Hyrcanus for the use of the Romans.

But the principal things which they alledged as the cause of their dissatisfaction, was the violent, daring and ambitious temper of Herod, insomuch that in the heat of their indignation, they went to Hyrcanus with a complaint, to this effect:

"How long shall the state sus-
"tain these injuries, unnoticed by
"you? Do not you perceive that
"the dignities, profits and prero-
"gatives of royal power, are shared
"between Antipater, and his two
"sons; and that you yourself have
"only the empty name and title
"of a prince? Beware of letting
"things go too far, and being over
"secure; for certainly the safety of
"your person and government lie
"equally at stake."

In consequence of this application to Hyrcanus, Herod was cited to appear before a bench of judges.

He obeyed his summons, and having stood a considerable time in the court

court with his face toward the judges without any person attempting to open the cause; at length *Sameas* an upright and eloquent counsellor, thus harangued the culprit and the court.

"With the permission of yourself, Sir, and of this honorable court, I must observe, that this is the first time that ever I saw a prisoner at the bar, behaving himself with such an air of vanity and confidence.

"It has been the practice formerly, of persons in his condition, to demean themselves, with sobriety and resignation; but we have a criminal that values himself upon his guards, his ornaments, and his purple; and stands in a posture to make public justice more dangerous to the court than to the criminal. God is a God of righteousness and power; and the time will come when this very man whom you suffer to take these liberties, shall be the ruin of you, both king and judges."

Not long after, upon Herod's getting possession of the government, he put the king to death, and all the judges, except Sameas; for whom he had a singular honour, in regard both of his integrity and justice, and more particularly, as the person, that, after the besieging of the city by himself and Sosias, was instrumental to the admitting of him into the place, with this further declaration, that it was a judgment upon them for their sins, and a punishment not to be avoided.

Herod apprehensive of danger withdrew and resigned himself to the care and protection of *Sextus Cæsar*, who settled him in consideration of a sum of money in the government of Celo-Syria. Herod thus possessed of considerable power, and exasperated at the indignity of being exposed to a trial, he marched against Hyrcanus with an army; and had it not been for the importunities of his father, and his brother, he had most certainly fallen upon Jerusalem.

But Herod was so wrought upon by this advice, that he contented himself with shewing the people what power and reputation he had upon this occasion.

In order to demonstrate the favour in which the Jews were held by the Romans, the conquerors of the world, we cite the following decree of the senate that passed soon after *Julius Cæsar* assumed the important dignity.

CAIUS JULIUS CESAR, EMPEROR, PONTIFEX MAXIMUS, AND THE SECOND TIME DICTATOR, TO THE MAGISTRACY, SENATE, AND THE PEOPLE OF SIDON, GREETING.

I Myself, and the army are in health, and if you are well, all is well. I send you the copy of a letter of ours to Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander the prince and high-priest of the Jews, to be engraven upon a brass table, the inscription in Latin and Greek, and to remain among your registers for after times. The letter itself in substance is as follows:

C. Julius Cesar, emperor, the second time dictator, and *Pontifex Maximus*, hath, with the advice and consent

consent of the senate, appointed the publication of this decree.

Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, a Jew, hath at all times, as well in war as in peace, approved himself to be our trusty good friend and ally, as appeareth by several attestations of unquestionable credit, and particularly by the supply of fifteen hundred choice men that he sent to Mithridates, to my assistance in the late Alexandrian war. These services and good offices duly considered, I do hereby confirm and establish unto Hyrcanus, and his heirs, the perpetual government of the Jews, both as their prince and high-priest, after the manner and method of their own laws; and from this time forward, enroll them among my trusty and beloved friends, and ratify an affinity with them as my associates.

And it is my pleasure likewise, that all the legal pontifical rites and privileges be devolved upon him and his sons for ever. And in case any controversy shall arise among the people concerning the Jewish discipline, himself, and his family, in the course of succession, to be the only judges of it.

It is moreover my will and pleasure, that the Jews be discharged the burden of winter quarters, and of all public payments.

We shall now come to some of his particular grants, resolutions, and decrees.

"*Caius, Cesar*, emperor, dictator, and consul, taking into his consideration the honour, the friendship, and the good services of Hyrcanus, doth hereby, for the benefit and advantage of the senate and people of Rome, grant unto Hyrcanus, and to his sons after him, by succession, the authority and office of princes and priests of Jerusalem, and of the whole nation of the Jews, to be by them exercised and enjoyed, in the same manner as their ancestors.

"And we farther ordain and appoint, that the city of Jerusalem shall be repaired and fortified; and that Hyrcanus, shall have the administration of the government, with an abatement upon the duty every second year of part of their taxes, and other exemption from carriages and other tributes.

"Caius Julius, the forth time emperor, the fifth time consul, and perpetual dictator, makes this mention of Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, the prince and high-priest of the Jews.

"Whereas my predecessors, as well in the provinces as in the senate, have formerly born witness to many honourable reports on behalf of the High-Priest, Hyrcanus, and the generality of the Jews, who have thereupon received the thanks of the senate and people of Rome, in acknowledgment of their worth and goodness, we look upon their friendly offices, as obligations never to be forgotten; and upon ourselves, as bound in the name of the senate and people of Rome, to give Hyrcanus, his family and countrymen, all possible demonstrations of the sense we have of their amity and esteem."

Many

Many others passed of the same kind; but these we omit, as this suffices for our purpose.

CHAP. IV.

AFTER THE DEATH OF CESAR, CASSIUS ENTERS INTO A FACTION, AND JOINS WITH HEROD IN OPPRESSING THE JEWS. DIVERS INSTANCES OF THE CRUELTY AND AMBITION OF HEROD. ANTIPATER IS POISONED. REGARD OF HEROD FOR THE TYRIANS. HE DEFEATS ANTIGONUS. EDICT IN FAVOUR OF THE JEWS.

CESAR having been treacherously assassinated in the senate-house, the citizens of Rome formed parties and factions, which were followed by a civil war. *Caſſius* one of the leading men among the conspirators obtained the command of the army in Syria, which was then before Apamia; raised the siege, and brought over *Marcus* and *Baſſus* into his interest; and proceeded from place to place, collecting men, money, and arms wherever he came, but oppressing Judea above all the rest, by an imposition of between seven and eight hundred talents of silver.

In this confusion, Antipater committed the care of levying one part of this money to his two sons, and the rest of it to *Malichus*, a notorious villain, together with some others. Herod, who was willing to oblige the Romans at the expence of the people over whom he presided, began with the most acceptable presents to Cassius, of the contribution of Galilee, as the first fruits of his service; but several cities under other governors, were exposed to public sale, by order of Cassius, who was so exasperated against Malichus, upon this occasion that if Hyrcanus had not pacified him with a composition of a hundred talents out of his own coffers, by the hands of Antipater, it would have cost him his life.

Malichus therefore entered into a plot against Antipater, inferring, that if he was taken off, Hyrcanus would find himself more easy and secure in his government. Antipater suspecting his design, passed the river Jordan, and put himself at the head of as many Jews and Arabians as he could collect; but Malichus, who was bold and artful, finding himself suspected, went to Antipater and his sons, and cleared himself of the suspicion by the dint of perjury.

Cassius having assembled a powerful army and fitted out a considerable fleet, conferred the command of both on Herod, and appointed him at the same time governor of Celo-Syria, with a further promise of the kingdom of Judea, as soon as the war should be over with Anthony, and the younger, Cesar, afterwards *Auguſtus*, in which they were then engaged.

The promotion of Herod rendering Malichus jealous of the interest that would follow to his father Antipater, he bribed a servant of Hyrcanus to poison him at his master's table, and thereupon, with a guard of soldiers took possession of the city. Such was the unhappy end of Antipater;

tipater; a just and a good man, and a true lover of his country.

Herod and Phasael resented the murder of their father, but Malichus had the confidence to stand upon his justification. The two brothers were both agreed in the determination of a revenge; but the question was, in what manner it was to be effected.

Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, now entered into a design to oppose Herod, and with this view engaged *Fabius* for a sum of money to join with him in raising an army, taking *Marion* also into his assistance, who, by the favour of Cassius, had obtained the command of Tyre, and of all Syria, having settled several garrisons there, and three in Galilee, upon his own borders; but Herod quickly reduced these places, treating the Tyrians who kept them, with every token of respect, tenderness, and generosity, for the affection he bore towards them.

His next business was immediately to march up to Antigonus, whom he encountered and defeated upon his very entrance into Judea, and returned triumphant from thence to Jerusalem, where he was received by Hyrcanus and the whole people with every instance of honour and esteem.

After the defeat of Cassius at Philippi, by Anthony and Augustus, Cesar went into Gaul, and Anthony into Asia, who was complimented on his march into Bithynia with embassies and applications from several parts; and among others, with complaints and accusations against Phasael and Herod, from many eminent persons among the Jews, suggesting that Hycanus, though he had the name of governor, was in effect, but a nominal prince; for that the two brothers had usurped the authority and administration to themselves.

Herod pleaded so well for himself and enforced his arguments with so large a sum of money, that his adversaries were not admitted to be heard against him.

Upon Anthony's coming to Ephesus, ambassadors were sent from Hyrcanus, the High-Priest, and the whole body of the Jews, with a crown of gold, desiring that their countrymen, who were carried away prisoners by Cassius, contrary to the rules of war, might be set at liberty, and the lands restored to those who had been wrongfully deprived of them.

Their request was found to be so reasonable, that Anthony presently granted their petition, and wrote to Hyrcanus, and to the Jews, and likewise dispatched an edict to the Tyrians, to the following effect:

MARCUS ANTONIUS, EMPEROR, TO HYRCANUS THE HIGH-PRIEST, AND PRINCE OF THE JEWS, GREETING, JOY AND HEALTH.

WHEREAS we have received from Losinachus the son of Pausanius, Joseph the son of Menneus, and Alexander the son of Theodorus, your ambassadors, at Ephesus, fresh assurances of the continuance of yours and your people's affection

affection for us, according to what hath been formerly exhibited to us at Rome; in which commission they have faithfully acquitted themselves; and whereas we are abundantly satisfied with the sincerity of your intentions, and more from the proof we have had of your good faith, piety and virtue, than by the force of words, we do heartily agree to your proposals, and embrace your friendship.

It is our pleasure, that you shall quietly enjoy to yourselves and your heirs, all the graces and privileges unto you granted by myself and Dolobella, with an express inhibition to the Tyrians, that they give you no sort of molestation, and as positively commanding them to make full restitution of all the goods and estates that has been taken away from the Jews, declaring our acceptance also of the crown you were pleased to send.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

CONTRACT OF ANTIGONUS WITH THE PARTHIANS, TO DISPOSE HYRCANUS, AND TAKE OFF HEROD AND HIS PARTY. HERCANUS AND PHASAEL ARE SEIZED, BUT HEROD ELUDES THEIR DESIGN, AND AFTER SEVERAL SKIRMISHES, MAKES HIS ESCAPE, TOGETHER WITH A CONSIDERABLE PARTY. BUILDS HERODIUM. JERUSALEM BESIEGED. ANTIGONUS OBTAINS THE GOVERNMENT, AND AVENGES HIMSELF ON HYRCANUS. PHASAEL DESTROYS HIMSELF. HEROD DEPARTS TOWARDS EGYPT; THENCE PROCEEDS TO ROME. IS HONOURED BY AUGUSTUS; MADE KING OF JUDEA, AND CONDUCTED WITH GREAT POMP TO THE CAPITAL.

ANTIGONUS, son of Aristobulus, envious of the power of Hyrcanus, and his party, contracted with the Parthians, for a thousand talents, and five hundred of the finest women, to effect the present possession, and invest him with the government of Judea.

Accordingly the king sent his son Pacorus, and his general Bargaphames with a powerful army to invade that country. Having divided their forces, Pacorus marched along the coast; and Bazaphame kept his rout through the inland part. The king's son, having Antigonus in his party, was joined by the Jews that dwelt about Mount Carmel, and many other in the course of their march, so that he had collected a very formidable army, and boldly advanced

to

to the city of Jerusalem, with a determined resolution to attack Herod and Phasael in the royal palace.

Upon their arrival, a considerable faction declared in favour of Antigonus and Herod, after some fruitless resistance, and vain endeavours to keep the city, betook himself to flight.

In the mean time the Parthians having seized Hyrcanus and Phasael, loaded them with irons, while Herod finding himself in an enemy's country, amongst a people, who were averse to his person and government, determined to prosecute his journey to the castle of Masiada, together with his nearest relations, lest they likewise should fall into the hands of the combined parties.

In their hasty retreat, the carriage in which Herod's mother rode, was unhappily overset, and such was the concern of her son, that according to the testimony of Josephus, he attempted to stab himself, but being prevented from the execution of so rash a design, pursued his journey towards the intended asylum.

As the number of those who attended him in his flight was very considerable; they repulsed divers parties which endeavoured to molest them, and came off victorious. So strongly was this circumstance impressed upon the mind of Herod, that when he afterwards ascended the throne of Judea, he erected a spacious palace, and founded a village upon the spot whereon he had given the enemy the most signal repulse, and called it Herodium.

Being met at Ressa, a town of Idumea, by his brother Joseph, they deliberated on future measures, and reflecting that the castle of Massada, was not sufficiently extensive to contain their numbers, concluded to seperate, so that having furnished themselves with provisions, and disposed of their women and most valuable baggage in the castle, which was well furnished with necessaries; they formed into parties, and Herod with his body proceeded towards Arabia.

Antigonus, having by this time gained possesion of the government of Judea, through the assistance of the king of Parthia, was greatly incensed at the escape of the women, and the loss of the money which he had promised as a reward to his allies; so that in the fury of his resentment, he ordered the ears of Hyrcanus to be cut off, in order to disqualify him for the dignified order of the priesthood.

Phasael, finding his situation desperate, and dreading the revenge of the conqueror, put an end to his life in a most extraordinary manner; for being menaced, he dashed out his brains against the prison wall.

Herod being arrived on the borders of Arabia, applied to Malichus, who fearing the resentment of the Parthians, not only denied his request, but forbid him by his messengers even from entering his dominions. Thus embarrassed on all sides, he betook himself to Egypt, where he was honourably received, and sumptuously entertained by Cleopatra; but being determined on a voyage to Rome, from a view of obtaining the favour and interest of the conquerors of the world,

world, he set forward, and after a tedious and dangerous passage in the midst of winter, landed at Brundusium, and from thence proceeded to Rome.

Being versed in all the arts of insinuation, and endued with great eloquence, he represented his late adventures in such striking terms to Anthony, that the generous Roman, wrought upon by the affecting tale, and the remembrance of his father Antipater, not only espoused his cause, but engaged Cæsar in his interest, to the great joy of the ambitious suppliant.

The case of Herod was soon after brought before the senate, who in consequence of Anthony's setting forth in a very elaborate manner, the service he had done the Roman common-wealth; and representing the indignity they had sustained from Antigonus, in accepting the government from the hands of the Parthians; pronounced Herod king of Judea, and declared Antigonus a professed enemy to the state.

When the senate broke up, Cæsar and Anthony accompanied by a great number of the members, conducted Herod with the utmost solemnity, to the capital, where they sacrificed with the usual ceremonies, and deposited the decree, that had lately passed.

Anthony then entertained the king in the most sumptuous manner, and publicly congratulated him on the honours which had been conferred upon him in so signal a manner, by the most dignified people of the universe.

CHAP. VI.

HEROD'S PARTY DISTRESSED IN MASSADA. HE MARCHES TO THEIR ASSISTANCE. REINFORCED BY THE ROMANS. OBTAINS VERY CONSIDERABLE ADVANTAGES BY THE REDUCTION OF DIVERS PLACES. SETS HIS FRIENDS AT LIBERTY. ENCAMPS NEAR JERUSALEM. RECOVERS GALILEE. HIS BROTHER JOSEPH THRO' INADVERTENCE LOSES HIS LIFE. SIEGE OF JERUSALEM CARRIED ON WITH GREAT VIGOUR ON BOTH SIDES. TERMINATES IN FAVOUR OF HEROD, WHO CAUSES ANTIGONUS TO BE PUT TO DEATH. EXTINCTION OF THE FAMILY OF ASMODEUS.

WHILE the interest of Herod was so essentially promoted by the concurrence of the Roman senate; his friends who were blocked up in the castle of Massada, were exposed to great hardships, through the pressure of Antigonus, and a great scarcity of water, insomuch that being on the point to surrender, Joseph had conceived a design for escaping with his nearest relatives, and those of the party, who were most firmly attached to his cause. But the design was happily frustrated by a prodigious shower of rain, that fell on the very night which they had proposed for its execution. Being thus supplied with water, the besieged made a most furious sally, and repelled a party of the assailants with great loss.

Herod having received intelligence at Ptolemais, whence he had lately

arrived from Rome, of the situation of his friends, raised a considerable army, amongst whom was a party of Romans under the command of Ventidius and Silo; determined to act with the utmost vigour and resolution, in order to recover his kingdom as well as to relieve his friends.

Most of the Galileans joined him in his march, so that having reduced Joppa, he advanced to Massada, which having compelled to surrender, he set his friends at liberty; and after he had added the castle of Ressa to his conquests, proceeded to Jerusalem and encamped on the west side of that city.

Antigonus had taken every necessary precaution for its defence and security; he had supplied it with a numerous garrison, well furnished with warlike stores, so that having annoyed the assailants by frequent sallies, he became too confident of success, and sent an herald round the walls, to proclaim indemnity to all that would voluntarily surrender.

To enforce this proclamation, he addressed himself from the wall to Silo, and the Romans under his command representing the injustice they had done him in transferring the crown from his family, which was of royal descent, to Herod, who was of a Plebeian race; adding, that if they were disposed to express their resentment on account of his receiving the kingdom from the Parthians, they might nevertheless have conferred their favours upon some person of royal extraction, as many yet remained, who had never given them any just cause for displeasure.

From these reproaches, they came to acts of hostility, and the besieged plied their darts and arrows with such rapidity, that the enemy were soon driven from the walls.

This successful effort was greatly promoted by the treachery of Silo, who in consequence of a bribe from Antigonus, insinuated to the soldiers of Herod, the barrenness of the country, the inconvenience of their quarters, and their want of every necessary accommodation, which disposed them to wish for a conclusion being put to the siege.

Herod, having received intelligence of these proceedings, reminded Silo, in a persuasive tone, that he was not only sent by Cæsar and Anthony, but by the whole senate of Rome; declaring at the same time, that if he and his soldiers would stand their ground, they should be plentifully supplied with all things necessary.

Antigonus having notice of all that passed, dispatched parties to lie in ambuscade, and intercept the foragers; but Herod, who was equally active with the enemy, very frequently came up with them, and pursued his advantages with such vigour, that having extended his victory, as far as the river Jordan, all Galilee came over to his allegiance.

Herod finding that notwithstanding this advantage, his affairs were but inconsiderably promoted, as the Roman guards acted with great coolness in his interest, determined to repair to Anthony, leaving his brother Joseph to watch the motions of Antigonus.

Anthony received him, upon his arrival

arrival with every honourable token treated him a manner agreeable to his royal character, and assured him, that orders should be immediately dispatched to the Roman generals, to exert themselves with as much vigour in his cause, as if they were employed in the actual service of the state.

During the absence of Herod, Joseph unmindful of his instructions, marched toward Jericho with a detachment, in order to forage; and his party consisting of unexperienced men, were circumvented by the disciplined troops of Antigonus, and together with their leader easily vanquished.

Antigonus finding Joseph among the dead bodies, caused his head to be cut off, and set the price of fifty talents for the redemption of it, which was paid by his brother Phereras, and this occasioned a revolt of several of the Galileans.

Herod receiving intelligence of the death of his brother, while he was at a place called Daphne, hastened to mount Libanus, where taking eight hundred of the natives, and a Roman legion, with him, he advanced to Ptolemais, and from thence passing by night through Galilee, was beset in his march, but repulsed the enemy with considerable loss. By this time above eighteen months elapsed, since Herod upon the honours conferred on him, had determined to recover the government of Judea; considering therefore, that as long as Jerusalem held out, his possession of other places would be very precarious; he resolved to turn his whole force against the capital, and by reducing that, put a final period to the war, and establish himself upon the throne, from which he had been expelled.

To accomplish this important design, he encamped before the temple, which he encompassed with a triple trench. His own army consisted of about thirty thousand men, to which were added, eleven Roman legions of foot, and six thousand horse, under the command of Sosius, beside the auxiliary troops of Syria. The Jews within the city were resolute and numerous, animating each other by exclaiming, *The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!* and delivering such presages, as with the blessing of God, seemed to portend their speedy deliverance. In short, they exerted themselves with amazing vigour, and by furious sallies, frequently repelled the besiegers.

Herod observing from their animated conduct, that the siege would be long and doubtful, unless he could prevent the conveyance of provisions into the city, so disposed his troops as entirely to cut off all communication. He then prepared his battering engines, and bombarded the walls; but the besieged sustained the assault with incredible resolution, opposed stratagem to stratagem, and as soon as one wall was thrown down, supplied it with a retrenchment that served for another.

The Jews were at length much streightened for want of provisions; but animated by despair, determined to hold out to the very last extremity.

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At length being reduced to the lowest ebb, Herod entered the city, and the Jews retiring into the inner temple, were pursued thither. A horrible scene ensued, for the Romans, exasperated at the obstinate defence which they made, and Herod's party determined on the extirpation of the faction, put all to the sword, without regard to age, sex, or condition, so that the streets resounded with cries, and blood was spilt in every corner.

Antigonus finding all resistance vain, determined to submit, but not to Herod; therefore descending from a tower, he cast himself at the feet of Sosius the Roman general; who instead of pitying, upbraided him with pusillanimity, and committed him to the custody of a strong guard.

Herod being thus become master of the city, thought it highly expedient to preserve it from plunder. But this he found extremely difficult, and he was obliged to have recourse to intreaty, threats, and at length force, to restrain the people, and especially the mercenaries from seizing all that came within their reach, and even rifling the temple itself.

However he amply rewarded the Roman soldiers, who together with Sosius their general, departed from Jerusalem, carrying Antigonus bound to Anthony. Herod, fearing that Anthony would not take away his life, and that therefore he might lay his claim to the government before the Roman senate; which, as he was of royal blood, and himself a Plebeian, might render the issue extremely doubtful; by a private message, insinuated to him the necessity of taking off Antigonus.

The Roman was greatly inclined to preserve his royal prisoner, to grace his triumph, but being wrought upon by gold, (the most prevalent argument in past time, as well as the present) after he had briefly harangued on the expediency of the sentence, commanded him to be beheaded.

This action reflects much disgrace upon the memory of Anthony, as it was entirely without a precedent, he being the first Roman general, that subjected a conquered prince to such unjust treatment. Thus ended the reign of the illustrious family of Asmodeus, which in a successive line had held the government of Judea, during a hundred and twenty years; but were at length rendered extinct by intestine divisions, which has ever proved destructive to all states, families, and societies, amongst whom it his prevailed.

This memorable event fell out upon the day of a solemn fast, being the anniversary of the city's destruction by Pompey, which happened exactly twenty-seven years before this dreadful catastrophe.

CHAP. VII.

RESPECT SHEWN TO HYRCANUS IN HIS CAPTIVITY. HEROD PROMOTES A PERSON OF MEAN BIRTH TO THE PONTIFICATE, DEPOSES HIM AT THE INSTANCE OF HIS RELATIONS, AND ADVANCES A PERSON OF DIGNITY. INSTANCES OF THE CUNNING CRUELTY, AMBITION, PERFIDY, AND HYPOCRISY OF HEROD. HIS ARTFUL BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ANTHONY. HE JOINS HIM AGAINST CÆSAR OCTAVIANUS. OVERTHROWS THE ARABIANS. A DREADFUL EARTHQUAKE IN JUDEA. THE JEWS SUE FOR PEACE, AND THE ARABIANS PUT THEIR AMBASSADORS TO DEATH. HEROD ENCOURAGES THEM, AND COMPELS THE ARABIANS TO SUBMIT.

DURING the important transactions related in the foregoing chapter, Hyrcanus the high-priest remained in captivity with the Parthians, and was treated with the highest honour and esteem by king Phraates, who not only released him from his irons, but also allowed him the city of Babylon as the bounds of his confinement, where he was received by the Jews, who dwelt in that part with all the reverence due to his solemn character.

Notwithstanding his situation was rendered thus agreeable through the benevolence of the Parthian king, he discovered a fond desire for returning to his native country, vainly imagining that former services would secure him the favour of Herod. But his friends from the respect they bore his person, and the suspicion they entertained of the jealousy and perfidy of the king of Judea, endeavoured by alledging his incapacity for the pontificial dignity through mutilation, to divert the hopes he so fondly cherished; however he procured his discharge from Phraates, and went to Jerusalem, where he was received with singular respect.

Hyrcanus being rendered incapable of the office of high-priest, Herod began to deleberate with himself concerning the choice of a successor, and from a consciousness of his own low extraction; fearing to advance a person of royal descent, conferred that dignity upon one *Hananel*, an obscure Jewish priest whom he brought from Babylon.

The promotion of this mean person greatly disgusted Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus, and mother of Aristobulus, who resenting the contempt offered her family, in setting her son aside and obtruding a foreigner into the pontificate, wrote to Cleopatra queen of Egypt, to engage Anthony in her cause, that the honour might be conferred on her son, who had the most undoubted right to it.

Her application succeeded to her utmost wishes, for Herod hearing of the late procedure, at first affected resentment; but persuaded of the influence of the Egyptian queen with the powerful Roman, a reconciliation was soon effected between him and Alexandra, and followed by the deposition of Hananel, and the advancement of Aristobulus to the pontificate.

But Herod's jealousy of Alexandra would not permit the continuance of the reconciliation, for he grew so suspicious of her, that he forbade her to concern herself with public affairs, confined her to the court, and set spies to watch even her domestic Oeconomy. Exasperated at such base treatment, she again applied to Cleopatra, and having received an invitation from that princess, prepared for her departure. To conceal her design from Herod, she had procured two biers, in which the servants were to carry them to the sea side, where a vessel lay ready to convey them to Egypt.

But this stratagem miscarried through the treachery of a servant, that communicated it to one *Sabbion*, who being suspected of a concern in the poisoning of Antipater, Herod's father; in order to obviate that disgrace disclosed it to Herod. The king suffered them to pass a little way uninterrupted, and then surprised and brought them back; but fearing the power and influence of Cleopatra, who had espoused their interest, he suspended his resentment, affected a kindness for them, though at the same time he meditated revenge on Aristobulus, which he only waited an opportunity to execute; nor was it long before it presented itself.

At the feast of the tabernacles, Aristobulus was to officiate as High-Priest; he was then in the eighteenth year of his age, of a comely aspect, elegant form, and engaging mien.

When he advanced toward the altar, clad in the pontifical robes, to perform the ceremonies instituted by the law, he discharged his office with such grace, dignity and solemnity, as attracted the admiration of the whole assembly, and brought to their minds the noble acts of his royal grandfather Aristobulus, whose family they thought deserved a better condition than they now enjoyed.

The general approbation of the multitude increased the envy and jealousy of Herod, and hastened the fate of the royal youth; for when the feast of the tabernacles broke up, the king desired him to accompany him to an entertainment at Jericho, where he consulted a stratagem and caused him to be drowned, as he was bathing in a pool.

Thus was this accomplished youth taken off, through the execrable fraud of a wicked king, who immediately restored his creature *Hananel* to the pontifical dignity.

Herod, to wipe of all suspicion of so foul a deed, visited Alexandra, professed his innocence, and to give his abominable hypocrisy an air of sincerity, affected the most poignant grief, and cast forth showers of crocodile tears; but his fraudulent acts prevailed not with the disconsolate mother, who saw his villainy through all the guises he assumed.

The afflicted Alexandra again had recourse to Cleopatra, whom having acquainted with the treacherous behaviour of Herod, and the untimely death of her son, the queen determined

mined to espouse her cause, and therefore solicited Anthony to revenge the fate of Aristobulus.

Anthony, wrought upon by the importunity of Cleopatra, repaired to Laodicea, and cited Herod to clear himself from the imputation concerning the death of Aristobulus.

Herod, too artful to rely on the merits of his iniquitous cause, and dreading the influence of Cleopatra, who had incensed Anthony against him, was greatly perplexed how to proceed at this critical juncture; but necessity soon dictated an expedient. Persuaded that it was in vain to dispute the will of the powerful Roman, he appointed his uncle *Joseph* regent, during his absence, and set out for Laodicea,

Having on former occasions experienced the prevailing influence of gold, he provided himself with a very considerable sum, repaired with confidence to Laodicea, and by means of an insinuating tongue, and that most eloquent ore, wrought upon Anthony, who exculpated him from the imputation, and gave him repeated tokens of his favour: nay, he even told Cleopatra, that it was beneath the dignity of a king, to render an account of his conduct to any.

Herod having averted this danger, and secured his interest with Anthony, took his leave and returned home, where he trumpeted abroad the honours that had been conferred on him, and extolled the generous Roman above all the princes of the earth.

Soon after this transaction, the Roman state was involved in civil broils, through the competitions between *Cæsar Octavianus* and *Anthony* for the sole possession of empire; so that Herod could not stand as an idle spectator, after he had received so many signal favours from the latter.

Having therefore raised a very powerful army, he marched at the head of it to the assistance of his patron; but Anthony appointed him to proceed against the Arabians whom he deemed a false and faithless people.

In consequence of this order, he marched back with his army, and advanced into Arabia with a considerable body of horse and foot, and the natives having intelligence of his motions were ready to encounter him. An engagement ensued, and was maintained with great fury on both sides, till at length victory declared in favour of the Jews.

Herod having now appeased his enemies at home, and secured his interest abroad, returned to Judea, where he was received with esteem and respect.

Soon after this event, there happened in Judea a most dreadful earthquake, which devoured a great number of cattle, and caused the destruction of above ten thousand persons, who were buried in the ruins of the houses that were thrown down. The Arabians availed themselves of this calamity that had befallen the Jews, for when the latter compelled by their distresses, sent ambassadors to sue for peace, they not only seized and put them to death, but soon after advanced with an army against the Jews.

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This change of affairs greatly dispirited the Jews, but Herod by an animated speech dispelled their fears, revived their courage, so that they attacked them again, obtained a complete victory, and forced them to put themselves under his protection.

CHAP. VIII.

HEROD'S LATE SUCCESS FOLLOWED BY THE DEFEAT OF ANTHONY HIS PATRON AT THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM. THROUGH JEALOUSY, HE CAUSED THE DEATH OF HYRCANUS. SUBMISSIVELY APPLIES TO CÆSAR, WHO NOW ASSUMES THE SURNAME OF AUGUSTUS. MEETS WITH A FAVOURABLE RECEPTION, AND IS CONFIRMED IN THE GOVERNMENT OF JUDEA, GREATLY PERPLEXED BY DOMESTIC GRIEVANCES ON HIS RETURN. ATTENDS CÆSAR A SECOND TIME. PROCURES THE DEATH OF MARIAMNE. HIS HORRORS OF CONSCIENCE CONSEQUENT THEREUPON, IS SEIZED WITH A TERRIBLE DISEASE. ERECTS A MOST MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE ON HIS RECOVERY, WHICH IS THE LAST MEMORABLE OCCURRENCE IN THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS PREVIOUS TO THE INCARNATION OF THE BLESSED JESUS.

THE late victory highly gratified the ambitious Herod, but this sunshine of prosperity was soon eclipsed by a disaster that had well nigh ruined all his hopes; for Anthony having been defeated at the memorable battle of Actium, by his competitor, Cæsar Octavianus; he was under the most alarming apprehensions, lest the conqueror should deprive him of his kingdom, for having espoused the cause of Anthony.

This consideration excited his jealousy, and reflecting that Hyrcanus was living, and that he was the only one of the blood royal, he determined to put an end at once to his life and his own fears. While he was ruminating on this horrid design, the very family of Hyrcanus furnished him with an opportunity of executing his resolution.

Alexandra daughter of Hyrcanus, seeing her father careless and unconcerned at the miseries of his family, represented to him the disgrace of suffering the indignities which Herod put upon them, and advised him to apply to Malchus, king of Arabia, who would not fail to assist him, adding that if Cæsar should call Herod to account for his former friendship to Anthony, which might reasonably be expected, the crown would certainly devolve to him. Hyrcanus at first turned a deaf ear to the sollicitations of his daughter, but her importunity at length prevailed, and he wrote letters to Malchus, which he sent by *Dositheus*, whom he thought he had secured in his interest; but the traitor betrayed him to Herod.

The king, to render the design of Hyrcanus more open to the world, enjoined Dositheus to silence, bade him carry the letter to Malchus, who would not fail to give him an answer, which when he had got, he ordered to be brought to him.

Dositheus hastened to Malchus; and having delivered Hyrcanus's letter,

ter, received an answer, which he immediately brought back to Herod, who sending for him, charged him with holding a correspondence with the king of Arabia; and upon his denial, produced the letter of Malchus. Hyrcanus being thus self-condemned, he caused him to be put to death in the eighty-first year of his age.

Having thus obviated all ground of suspicion on this quarter, Herod prepared to wait on Cæsar, who with the assent of the senate and people of Rome, had assumed the title of emperor, and surname of *Auguſtus*; the form of government having been legally changed, from a republic into a manarchy. Though he had no ground to expect any indulgence from the emperor, he determined to apply to him: but lest his mother-in-law, Alexandra, might in his absence occasion some tumult, he committed the care of the government to his brother *Pheroras*, and secured his mother and wife in such a manner as to prevent any quarrels that might arise between them, as he knew they were actuated by a most implacable aversion to his conduct.

After the necessary precautions, he hastened to Rhodes to meet Augustus, where, upon his arrival, in due deference to the emperor, he took up his crown, and laid it aside. He was received with great courtesy, and emboldened thereby, frankly represented to Cæsar, that he had retained a friendship for Anthony, assisted him with money and provisions, and was ready to sacrifice his life and fortune in his interest; but as the face of affairs was changed, he would serve him in an unfeigned and unreserved a manner as he had done the other.

This address, so concise and pertinent, wrought so effectually upon Augustus, that he desired him to resume his crown, confirmed him in his kingdom of Judea, and received him into his immediate friendship, assuring him, that he should hold him in equal esteem with Anthony, to whom he had done so many signal services.

Having thus obtained the favour and interest of the greatest monarch upon earth, he returned to Judea, loaded with honour and power, to the astonishment of the people, who expected from this interview a very different turn of affairs.

Herod now found that great disorders prevailed in his family, through the instigation of his wife and mother, who were so incensed at their confinement, that they reproached him to his face, especially *Mariamne*, who not only upbraided him with a cruel design upon her life, but affected the utmost grief when he related to her the success of his interview with Cæsar.

This aversion tortured the mind of Herod; ambition dictated revenge to punish the woman's pride; but love interceded in her behalf. Jealousy and love thus agitating his disturbed mind, his hatred at length prevailed, and he had determined something fatal against Mariamne, if an accident had not prevented his purpose.

Hearing of the death of Anthony, and Cleopatra, and that Augustus was

possessed of all Egypt, he was obliged once more to attend him. Therefore committing the care of his family to *Sohemus*, and vesting him with the government of part of Judea, in his absence, he departed, and was honourably received by Cæsar, who conferred on him additional favours, adding to his kingdom several places on the continent as well as the coast.

When he had waited upon Cæsar as far as Antioch, he returned to Jerusalem, where having wasted a year without being able to pacify his queen, he determined to chastise her at the expence of his own peace. As he had no just pretence for proceeding against her, his sister furnished him with an accusation to take her off, by bribing Herod's cupbearer, to tell him, that the queen had corrupted him to poison him.

Upon this Herod calling a council of friends only, accused her of a design to take him off, and being now determined in his revenge, upbraided her, in the vilest terms, to the general disapprobation of the assembly.

After many struggles between conscience and passions, he commanded her to be put to death, and the queen received her doom with all the composure of conscious innocence, and with that intrepid resolution, which virtue alone can inspire, gently submitted to the fatal stroke.

His very soul was now possessed with all the horrors of guilt, he called upon her name, but his cruelty had deprived her of the power of answering; his griefs would admit of no allay; the pursuit of glory ceased to be his delight; he supinely neglected his government, and was wholly absorbed in his sorrows. In vain did friends invent amusements to divert him; all sense of pleasure was banished, and nothing remained but sad despair.

While the king was in this state of anxiety, the pestilence raged in Jerusalem, which swept away numbers of people of all ranks and degrees, and was looked upon as the just judgment of God for the murder of the innocent queen.

The king, over-whelmed with grief, went into retirement, where in a few days he was seized with a dangerous disorder, that baffled all the art of his physicians. In this condition he languished some time, during which Alexandra attempted to possess herself of all the fortresses of Jerusalem, which when Herod heard, he commanded her to be put to death.

When he recovered from this distemper, he practised every degree of oppression and cruelty, that ambition and malice could possibly suggest, changed all the ancient laws and customs of the Jewish nation, for foreign inventions and ridiculous innovations, and, in short, incurred the ill-will and contempt of the people of Judea.

During this scene of confusion and impiety, the kingdom was afflicted with a drought, famine, and pestilence, which raged with unabated violence a considerable time; however, having obtained a grant for the exportation

exportation of corn out of Egypt, it was equally distributed among the people, to their no small relief.

This conduct of Herod in some degree, restored his character, and reconciled many of the people to his person and government.

When this calamity was removed and he had recovered his health, he rebuilt a city, and erected a temple in it, which being dedicated to Augustus, he called Cæsarea. As he had performed many famous exploits, he determined to erect a most magnificent temple in Jerusalem, in all respects larger and more stately than the former. Accordingly, having by an elaborate harangue, brought the people to consent to the undertaking of so arduous a work, it was accomplished in about nine years, and six months, and dedicated with all the usual forms and solemnities.

This is the last remarkable occurrence in the history of the Jews, previous to the Incarnation of the Blessed JESUS, except the extraordinary appearance of the Angel *Gabriel* to *Zachariah* the Priest, and the Holy Virgin: the particulars of which circumstances being related at large in our Introduction to the LIFE of CHRIST, are omitted in this place.*

Such was the state of the Jews at this memorable period of time, which according to the best Chronologers, fell out in the year of the world 4004, when Augustus Cæsar was emperor of Rome, and Herod under the Roman state, had governed the kingdom of Judea, about twenty-four years.

* As some of our readers may not have seen the particulars to which we refer, they are reminded, that they are circumstantially related by the Evangelist St. Luke in his first chapter, from which we learn that the Angel Gabriel who appeared to Zacharias, as he was executing the duties of his office in the temple, and predicted the birth of John the Baptist the harbinger of our Blessed Lord, likewise predicted to the Blessed Virgin, the Incarnation of the Son of God.

THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK XI.

The LIFE of JOB, with Remarks Practical and Explanatory.

As the Account of Job refers not to any particular Branch of the ſacred Hiſtory, and it was deemed moſt expedient to carry on the Relation with as great a Regard to the connection of the reſpective Circumſtances as poſſible, we could not inſert it in the Order in which it ſtands in the Bible, without interrupting the regular Plan; and therefore preſume it moſt proper thus to preſent it to our Readers.

VARIOUS have been the conjectures of learned men concerning the person of *Job*, whom some suppose to have been descended from *Nahor*, the son *Terah*, and brother of *Abraham*, while others derive his origin from *Eſau*, imagining him to have been *Jobab*, his great grandson. But the most probable notion is, that he sprung from *Abraham*, by *Keturah* his second wife: as he is said to have been the greatest and most considerable man for opulence of all the inhabitants of the East, into which country Abraham sent his son by Keturah.

That Job lived before the law, may be gathered from his offering burnt offerings in the land where he resided; which offerings were forbidden in any other place, than that which the land should chuse in some one of the tribes of *Iſrael*. That he lived after *Jacob* is evident from the character given him by God, *That there was none like him on earth, for uprightneſs and the fear of God.*

Upon the whole, though the precise time of Job's birth cannot be ascertained; yet there is an almost general concurrence amongst Commentators, that he lived in the time of the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt; some placing his birth in the same year in which Jacob went down into Egypt, and dating the beginning of his trials in the year that Joseph

Joseph died, being the twenty-first of Job's life.

Nor are there fewer opinions concerning the time of writing his history; some affirming that it was written after the death of *Moses*, who by others is supposed to have been the author of it. However, who was the compiler is a matter of no real importance, as the Book of Job gives the clearest and most extensive view of patriarchal religion. The reality of his person, the eminence of his character, his fortitude and patience in very great afflictions, his preceding and subsequent felicity are allowed by all divines.

Some learned men indeed, and amongst the rest *Grotius* and *Le Clerc*, imagine that this noble performance was written about a thousand years after the time in which Job lived, namely, in or near the period of the Babylonish captivity, alledging the frequent Chaldaic expressions that occur in it, that some passages are taken from the Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiasties; that there are more than a hundred words, partly Syriac, partly Arabic, that are not to be found in other parts of Scripture: which are all signs that the author lived in the latter time, when many words borrowed from the idioms of the neighbouring nations were admitted into the Hebrew.

It is one mark of the simplicity of very ancient times, that in the inventory of Job's estate, no mention is made of money, but only of oxen, sheep, camels, asses, and servants, Grotius likewise confesses, that there is no mention in the Book of Job of any law, or religious rites, but such as were traditional, nor of any points of history, nor any idolatrous practices, but such as were of the more ancient times before the Mosaic institution.

Schultens, an author versed in the oriental languages, affirms, that the style of this book hath all the marks of a most venerable and remote antiquity. Job is also honourably mentioned with *Noah* and *Daniel*, Ezek. xiv. 12.---20. From these remarks, it may not be unnecessary previous to our entrance on the particulars of the history, to observe.

1st. That he was as well as they, a person of distinguished piety.

2d. That he was well known, and celebrated as such amongst the Jews, to whom Ezekiel's prophecy was directed.

3d. That he must either have been of the seed of Israel, or like Noah, of the patriarchal times; otherwise the Jews, separated from, and raised in spiritual privileges above all other nations, would never have proposed to themselves one of their Gentile, uncircumcised neighbours of whom they had a mean opinion, as an example of the greatest piety, nor have admitted his history into their canon. If he was of the patriarchal times, he must have been at the distance of about a thousand years before Ezekiel.

Meer oral tradition of such a person could not have subsisted through so long a space of time, without appearing at last, as uncertain, as fabulous. There must therefore have been some history of Job in Ezekiel's

time; and as no other history, but that which we now have, and which has always had a place in the Hebrew code, was ever heard of or pretended; this must then have been generally known, and read as true and authentic, and consequently must have been written near to the age in which the fact was transacted, and not in future times when its credibility would have been greatly diminished.

In short if we would affirm, that the Book of Job is one of the oldest and noblest Books extant, we should have the vote of the best critics, and the frame of the Book would justify the assertion.

Job was a prince of the greatest eminence, wealth, and authority among the people of the East; his stock was immense, consisting of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen and five hundred she asses. He had seven sons and three daughters, who inherited not the virtues of their father, being greatly addicted to sensual pleasure; for when they arrived at years of maturity, and were free from his immediate inspection, they revelled in all the excesses of luxury and sportive delights.

When this behaviour was made known to their pious father; fearful that such a deviation from the laws and practices in which they had been educated, would incur upon them the divine wrath and vengeance; he kindly exhorted them to purify themselves by repentance and the performance of such ceremonies, as were then required; in order to prepare them to sacrifice to their justly offended God; the good man himself rising early in the morning, and offering burnt-offerings for them according to their number.

The pious care of Job obtained the approbation of the Almighty, who expressed his esteem of the same at a time when the sons of God, that is, the Angels came to present themselves before the Lord, at which time also Satan their adversary came among them, to seek an opportunity of doing them mischief. The Almighty, to set forth Job as an exemplary pattern of righteousness is represented as thus interrogating the great enemy of mankind. *Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a man exactly juſt, and one that feareth God and ſhunneth evil?*" The malignant fiend, unwilling to confess that Job served God from a truly pious principle, and arrogantly desirous of insinuating that his obedience proceeded from a motive of self-interest, is described as presumptuously replying. *Doth Job ſerve thee for nothing? Haſt thou not incloſed him on all ſides, ſecured him, and all that he hath from the reach of misfortune and danger; but withdraw thy protection, and ſuffer him to be afflicted with the loſs of the vaſt wealth thou haſt heaped upon him, and he will curſe thee to thy face.*"

The omniscient *Jehovah*, knowing the integrity of his servant, and that his example might have a pious effect upon others, exposed him to the fiery trial. *Behold*, says he, *All that he hath is in thy power, but preſume*

ſume not to touch his perſon. The grand foe to the present and future happiness of mankind, who walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; having obtained this permission set his accursed instruments to work and tempted the good man even unto blasphemy, attacked him with a train of complicated miseries, too great in all human probability for human nature to sustain. He took an opportunity to begin his assault on the day that his eldest son was to entertain his relations. He had instigated the Sabeans, a neighbouring people descended from *Sheba*, grandson of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, to make an inroad upon Job's territories, which they did with such fury, that but one servant escaped to bring the unhappy news to his master, which he did in this manner: *Thy oxen were ploughing, and the aſſes feeding by them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away, and they have put all the ſervants to the ſword, except myſelf.* Job had not time to reflect with himself whether this might be the effect of common depredation, or a judgment upon him for the folly and wickedness of his children, before this messenger was followed by another, who in the greatest consternation informed him. *That the fire of God was fallen from Heaven, and had burnt up his ſheep and his ſervants, and conſumed them all, ſo that he alone was eſcaped to tell him.*

This account was certainly very shocking, and the calamity coming from Heaven, might give it the appearance of a more immediate judgment than the former; but before Job could ruminate upon the dire cause, a third messenger hastily acquainted him, *That the Chaldeans in three parties had fallen upon the camels, and carried them away, and put all his ſervants to the ſword, except himſelf.*

Thus was Job stripped of all his substance in one day; and he who in the morning was the wealthiest man in all the East, was, before night, perhaps the most indigent creature upon earth.

The accursed fiend, however, finding this severe stroke ineffectual to accomplish his full desire upon righteous Job, determined to touch him in a more sensible part, and to come as near him as the bound prescribed by the Almighty would permit.

This prince of the air therefore, raising a very great storm, threw down the house, where Job's children were feasting, and by that means destroyed them all; and that the good man might not have time to digest his former losses, before the last messenger had made an end of relating to him the loss of his camels, another arrived, and with horror related, *That as his ſons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldeſt brother's houſe, there came a great wind from the wilderneſs, and ſmote the four corners of the houſe, and it fell upon the inhabitants, and they were dead, while he himſelf alone eſcaped to tell him.*

This last account touched the good man in the tenderest part; the death of his children at one stroke could

could not but affect him deeply, nor was the manner of their death less afflicting, considering that it happened at a time when, they were very unprepared for so awful an event.

But these repeated and aggravated calamities did not betray him into any irregularity of behaviour; the only vent he gave to his griefs was rending his mantle, the common token of affliction and sorrow in those eastern countries and early ages of the world; then deliberately following the other usual customs of mourning, he shaved his head, and in humble submission fell upon the ground and worshipped.

His misery could not render him forgetful of his duty, he therefore humbled himself under the divine hand, without whose permission he well knew, none of these misfortunes could have befallen him.

Thus to the great disappointment of the enemy of souls, righteous Job stood the shock, and in devout acknowledgment of his own meanness cried out, *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return to the earth, the common womb and mother of mankind.*

Then in resignation and thankfulness for what he had received at the hand of God, though now deprived of all, he gives up all for lost in this world, and says, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.*

The Patriarch's virtue therefore shone forth through his sufferings, which, great as they were, could not warp him from his duty and obedience to his great Creator. He well knew that it was but just, that he who gave, should have power to resume his grant whenever he pleased, and therefore instead of cursing, as Satan had maliciously suggested he would, he blessed God for all his dispensations, and proved the falsity of Satan's presumptuous declaration.

But the restless fury of the inveterate fiend, would not suffer him to suspend his attacks; for when the sons of God, or as before observed, the Angels again presented themselves, it pleased the Lord to signify to Satan, the inflexible integrity of his servant, who, though tried in the tenderest point, would not deviate from his duty, or even repine at what he thought the dispensation of a divine Providence.

His piety in short appears in the midst of his trials, and his faith and resignation must be deemed most extraordinary. The old deceiver however artfully and maliciously observed, that God had hitherto only permitted him to try him at a distance, insinuating, that if he might be allowed to touch his person, he would still blaspheme.

The Omniscient being, knowing that these exercises, though grievous to flesh and blood, would redound to his glory, and the real benefit of his servant, as well as determined to arm him with patience to bear them, and in the end to recompence all his sufferings with an extraordinary reward, enlarged Satan's commission, but yet with a limitation, *Behold he is in thy power, but touch not his life.*

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The busy tempter, exulting in the enlargement of his power, persuaded himself of the possibility of overcoming Job's virtue, and therefore immediately fell upon him, while impressed with the sense of his late losses, and afflicted him with boils and ulcers from head to foot.

Never was human nature more disguised than righteous Job in this condition, his body being covered with loathsome excressences, not arising from a depraved habit of constitution, but inflicted by a malicious policy, which raised them to the highest extremity of pain, in order, if possible, to compel him to swear and blaspheme. Nor were his pains short and intermitting, but lasting and poignant, and to increase his misery, the loathsome nature of his distemper not only rendered him odious to himself, but to all others.

Thus was Job, though the greatest man in the East, of the strictest religion and virtue, the patron of the fatherless and widow, the admiration of the good, and the terror of the vicious and prophane, by the divine permission and the malice of the Devil, at once reduced to the most indigent and deplorable circumstances, stript of all his substance, bereaved of his children, seven sons and three daughters, and soon after seized with a most nauseous and painful disease from head to foot, which rendered him the most shocking spectacle of sorrow and wretchedness.

The country, so far as the fame of his religion and grandeur had spread, could not but hear his melancholy story with wonder and astonishment. The religious might be inclined to conclude, that such signal and sudden calamities could be no other than the judgments of God upon a man, who, under the mask of piety, had veiled a life of profaneness and debauchery. The wicked doubtless triumphed in his sufferings, as a justification of their own corrupt principles and practices, and a demonstration of the insignificancy of the strictest regard to God and his worship.

His relations and acquaintance, struck with horror and aversion to such a despicable vile, and abandoned creature, would not own him. The wife of his bosom treated him with unkindness and neglect. The basest of men broke in upon him like a legion of fiends, made his afflictions their sport, treated him with all manner of indignities, calumnies and slander, and even spared not to spit in his face.

Scarce ever were the feelings of the human heart oppressed with such a complicated load of grief; scarce ever was a profession of religion so much exposed to censure, reproach and insult.

In this situation, as he was probably pouring out his supplications to Heaven, his wife spared not to reproach him with his proposterous goodness, in words to this effect: *Will you bleſs God, when he is deſtroying you! Will you call upon him, and believe he is good, when he hath ruined your eſtate and family, and in ſpite of all your ſubmiſſion is ſlaughtering your body, and within a ſtroke of your life?*

But Job returned no other than a mild answer, as became a good man and an affectionate husband. *You ſpeak not like yourſelf, but as a woman void of underſtanding. It is fit God ſhould always ſmile upon ſinful creatures? Shall we ſay, he is not juſt when he brings us into affliction? We receive what pleaſeth us with joy, and it is but reaſonable that we receive what is ungrateful with compoſure and reſignation; ſeeing both come from the ſame wife and ſovereign diſpoſer of all events.*

Thus did the Almighty preserve and support his eminent servant under the loss of his estate and children, under the extremity of his pains, the desertion of his friends and relations, the neglect of his servants, and the provocation of his wife.

The steadiness of Job's mind was more severely tried by his three friends, *Eliphaz* the Temanite, *Bildad* the Shuhite, and *Zophar* the Naamathite, men of the same rank and piety, who dwelt in some of the adjacent provinces, and in whose familiarity he had probably been long happy.

The report of his sufferings, of the ruin of his character, and the wound thereby given to religion, having reached their ears, they agreed with a sincere intention to join their endeavours in administering the only advice and consolation, they apprehended his case would admit; for as their suspicions were strong, and his calamities carried evident marks of divine inflictions, they had the same opinion of them with the rest of the world, and believed they were the just judgments of God upon an hypocrite, they determined by all means to fix a sense of guilt upon his conscience, in order to bring him to true repentance, and so to a solid interest in the divine favour and blessing.

But when they were come, and had found their late flourishing, honourable and highly esteemed friend, reduced to the state of a most loathsome and miserable wretch, that was sitting among ashes, they were astonished beyond expression, and being confirmed in their evil suspicions, though they sat with him on the ground; yet as their bad opinion of him would not allow them to say any thing comfortable and encouraging, they kept silence for several days.

The sight of his old acquaintance, and their unfavourable manner of condolence, raised his passion of sorrow to such a pitch, that it burst out into a torrent of the most bitter reflections on the day of his birth, wishing it had been struck out of the number of days, or rendered as odious and detestable to all others, as it was to himself.

Upon this Eliphaz, probably the oldest and most honourable of the three, addressed himself to Job, and in the softest manner opened their sense of his case; namely, that in their apprehensions of his case, he had been very defective in the character to which he had pretended; that great sufferings must be the punishment of great sins; and that they could recommend him to no other method

method of regaining his former peace and prosperity, than repentance and seeking unto God for pardon. In short they plainly declared, that they judged he had been a very wicked man, and that his calamities were an evident indication of the divine wrath against him as such, endeavouring by that means to extort a confession of guilt from him.

But the pious though afflicted patriarch immoveable in his sincerity to God, and innocence to man, flatly denied their insinuations, and this produced a dispute between him and his friends, which as is common in such cases, was carried on with a growing warmth and eagerness on both sides; and on both sides might occasion some expressions too severe and exaggerating.

His friends argued from experience, and what they had observed to be the usual method of divine Providence, they had seen many instances of wicked men, or of those who had passed for such, remarkably punished, and hence they had formed to themselves a general maxim, that where they saw great wretchedness and the acutest sufferings, there must be crimes proportionably great.

To this Job opposed, likewise observation and experience; and shewed, that the rule of judging they had formed to themselves, was by no means right or without exception, observing that good men were sometimes afflicted, and the wicked flourishing and happy; and that for the most part the good things of this life were dealt out promiscuously; that this was more especially the case in times for war and pestilence, and such other calamities, where the good and bad fell undistinguished. To all this he added, that it was a very heavy aggravation of his misery, to hear his friends so well acquainted with him, persons of sense and distinction, charge him with crimes which his soul abhored, and of which God who had afflicted him knew that he was innocent.

To him he was ready to appeal, and still adhere in life and death, though he did not know why he had dealt so severely with him. So strongly did Job assert his integrity, that his friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to silence.

During this argument between Job and his friends, there was present one Elihu, a young man of good understanding, who acted as moderator between them, and censured both parties very freely and judiciously. He charged Job with no crime as the cause of his afflictions, but seemed to think he had not managed the dispute about them, with so much calmness and submission to God as became his piety. He also endeavoured to convince him by argument drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty and unsearchable wisdom, that it is not inconsistent with his justice to lay his afflicting hand upon the best and most righteous of men; adding that it was the duty of all men to bear such exercises, when any befal them, without murmuring or repining, and to acknowledge the justice of God therein.

Job

Job heard all this with great attention, but made no reply, probably lest he might be drawn to utter some unguarded expression, which the hard treatment of his three friends might have extorted from him.

When they were all silent, the Lord himself took up the matter, and out of the whirlwind directed his speech to Job, wherein after the most striking disposition of the works of the Creation, he effectually convinced Job of his own weakness and inability of himself to understand the ways and designs of his mysterious Providence.

This speech of the deity, contained in ch. 38, 39, 40, 41. most inimitably grand and sublime, representing the vast extent of the divine wisdom and power in the formation of the universe, shews.

1st. That all things in the sky, the air, the earth, and the sea, are produced and disposed in a manner far beyond the reach of human reason, wisdom, or power.

2d. As a consequence that man is not qualified to dispose of himself, or of any other being. That God may have wise and good reasons for his ways, works, and dealings with us which we cannot comprehend; and therefore it is our duty, in all cases to acquiesce and submit.

3d. That he who has given various natures and instincts to animals, can give being and life, when and where, and in what degree he pleases.

4th. That he is present to care for, sustain and direct every living thing, and therefore that we ought to trust in him for a happy issue out of any of his inflictions.

5th. That the wisest of men should be very cautious and modest in censuring the ways of Providence.

These salutary effects seem to have been produced in holy Job in a most remarkable degree, nor can any thing display a genuine humility more forcibly than his address, *Behold! I am vile and contemptible in comparison of thee. What shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.*

He then proceeded to a more ample confession of the supremacy, power and wisdom of God, to this effect. *I know thou canst do every thing; and that no thoughts can be hid from thee. Well mightest thou ask, who he was that darkened counsel by words without knowledge? I am sensible, I have uttered what I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. But henceforward I desire to learn of thee; therefore hear I beseech thee when I speak, and declare unto me what I ask. I have heard of thee before, by the hearing of the ear, (which gave me but a distant knowing of thee) but now I have obtained a more clear and certain apprehension of thee, for mine eyes have seen thee; wherefore I abhor myself for what I have done amiss, and repent in dust and ashes.*

This free and humble acknowledgment of Job, was so pleasing in the sight of God, that he graciously condescended to declare himself in his

his favour against his friends, who by their hard censures and bitter reflections, instead of being his comforters, had proved his tormentors.

The address of God was to this effect, as particularly directed to Elphaz the Temanite. *My warmth is kindled againſt thee, and thy two friends, for ye have not ſpoken of me the thing that is right, as my ſervant Job hath. Therefore now take ſeven bullocks, and ſeven rams, and go to my ſervant Job, and offer up for yourſelves a burnt offering; and my ſervant Job ſhall pray for you; for his prayers will I accept; leſt I deal with you as you deſerve, for not ſpeaking the truth as my ſervant Job doth.*

His friends, alarmed at the threatnings of an offended God, with all haste prepared a sacrifice to appease the divine vengeance; and when it was presented, God was pleased to accept Job's intercessions for them.

After this, God was pleased to consider the afflicted state of his servant, and to reward his faith and piety with a more ample fortune than he possessed before his severe trials; doubling his former stock in every respect, excepting that of his children; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

He had also seven robust sons, who with three beautiful daughters, graced his table every day, and received an extensive inheritance among their brethren.

No sooner was the fame of Job's recovery, and the restoration and addition of his fortune spread abroad, but his friends and acquaintance from all parts, came to congratulate him upon this happy change of circumstances. Nor did they come empty handed; for every one brought him a valuable present; and to make his terrestrial happiness still greater, God blessed him with a prolongation of life beyond the common extent of those times; for he lived an hundred and forty years after his sufferings, which made his age above two hundred years, so that he saw an increase of his family to the fourth generation, and expired with the utmost composure and resignation, not doubting of being made a partaker of the inheritance of the faithful.

REMARKS

Practical and Explanatory on the Case and Character of JOB.

THE instructions particularly designed in the book of Job might not be so well understood in that age of the world; namely, that great sufferings are not always an argument of great sins, but that very good men may be very much afflicted in this world; that therefore we should not censure any under calamities, be the hand of God ever so apparent, unless the crime be likewise certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any condition, but meekly submit to his blessed will, who never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always comprehend it, adoring and receiving the unsearchable depths of his wise counsels, and believing that all will at the last turn to our advantage, if like his servant Job, we preserve in faith, hope and patience.

This was Job's real character, though not without errors. No error can be discovered in his behaviour, but those to which he was provoked by the uncharitable censure of his friends. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too strong justifications of himself, being withal extremely perplexed to give a plain and satisfactory account, why God afflicted him so severely.

God in the issue, satisfied him that he had great and weighty reasons; and in particular by doubling his prosperity, that he designed to make him a pattern of patience and reward. Whence we may learn, that under the severest visitations, the Lord is very compassionate and merciful to the sincere and upright soul, and will amply recompense in a future state.

Thus the great point in religion, before dark and doubtful, relative to the Providence of God, and the sufferings of good men, is cleared up with such evidence, as can no where else be found, but in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Though this point might not be so well understood, before it was thus illustrated, yet there are several important articles of religion of which Job and his friends, and doubtless many others, had very just and clear conceptions; as the being and perfections of God; that we receive all from him, the author of our being, and disposer of all events; that he sees and orders all things in Heaven and

and earth; that there can be no iniquity with him; that he is the friend and patron of virtue, and hates, and will punish vice and wickedness; nevertheless, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and bless those, who sincerely repent of their sins, and return unto him: that he is to be supremely reverenced and worshipped, as the sole sovereign of the universe, by prayers and sacrifices, by purity and integrity of heart, by justice in all our dealings, by acts of charity, goodness and benovelence to others, particularly to the helpless and indigent; by temperance and sobriety, curbing irregular desires and appetites; that men should not be elated and puffed up by large possessions, nor put their trust in riches; that they should avoid idolatry; that they should not wish evil to an enemy, nor rejoice in his misfortunes, much less think of murdering him; that they should abstain from adultery and fornication, from theft, rapine, and deceit; for the punishment of which crimes he mentions judges in his days, and was himself one of the chief.

These and such like principles are allowed, both by Job and his friends, and therefore were the religion of the Patriarchs, as indeed they are the principles of true and acceptable religion in all ages and parts of the world

Further, we may venture to affirm, that the religious in the preceding as well as subsequent ages, entertained the faith and hope of a future state. This has been the peculiar belief of all nations, from time immemorial; and it is scarce credible in the nature of the thing, that the greatest happiness of this life, which might at any uncertain time, and at length, would infallibly and totally be demolished by death, should ever become a solid principle of religion, considered as the sole reward of piety and virtue.

However, it appears, that Job expected a future world, for he had hope with regard to his condition, but not in this world; therefore his hope must be in a future state. As he absolutely despaired of any temporal deliverance; the hope he entertained of his innocence being cleared, must certainly refer to the day of judgment.

He had moreover a notion of the resurrection, as appears from chap. xiv. ver. 12. *So man lieth down, and riseth not, till the Heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. ver.* 14. *If a man die, shall he live again? Or shall a man live again after he his dead? Then I will patiently wait all the days of the time thou shalt be pleased to appoint, till my renovation shall come.*

If, according to Job's expression, after his skin, his body also was destroyed; how could he outlive this destruction, so as to be a man prosperous and happy again in this world? had this been his fixed belief, his frequent wishing for death, would be utterly unaccountable, his tragical complaints ridiculous, and his despair of health and happiness in this world, a palpable contradiction.

Upon the whole, if we set aside the doctrine of a future state, we must allow

allow, that Job's friends spoke more worthily of God, vindicating his Providence in the exact distribution of good and evil in this life, and that Job, who asserted the contrary, misrepresented his dealings with mankind; but as the approbation of an all-wise judge has been pronounced upon the latter, those who regard the words of eternal truth, need no other demonstration of the certainty of a future state of reward and punishment.

It is therefore presumed, that we have rendered it evident, beyond a doubt, by these strictures on the book of Job, that in the patriarchal age, there were persons eminent for piety and virtue, who worshipped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary communications from him; but that many were of a different character, wicked and ungodly men, and that idolatry, captivating the minds of the ignorant, weak and vicious, spread so fast, that it threatened the total destruction of the knowledge and pure worship of God.

These instances may satisfy us, that although life and immortality are brought into the fullest light by the gospel; a future state was not unknown from the beginning, to the coming of the ever blessed Redeemer of the world. So that we may take it for a good rule, that the words *Life* and *Salvation*, in the Old Testament, may be understood of a *future Life and Salvation*, when the context will admit of such an interpretation.

As the book of Job is fraught with peculiar expressions, and has therefore afforded great scope for the jest and ridicule of infidels, it may not be unnecessary, nor impertinent on this occasion, humbly to offer some considerations that may direct the devout believer in the understanding of it.

1st. He that would rightly explain and fully comprehend this book, must, as much as possible, imagine himself in the same distressed, afflicted condition.

2d. It must be observed to reconcile every circumstance, that though every daring thought or ardent expression, which occurs in the speeches of this afflicted and exasperated man, is not to be vindicated; yet as he was a great man and a prince, he may be allowed to use bold and animated language.

3d. We shall certainly judge amiss if we think every thing wrong, which will not suit with the politeness of our manners, and the prevailing mode of expression with us.

4th. In judging of the character of Job, we must set the noble strains of his piety against the unguarded expressions of his sorrow, and remember, that he insists not only on his innocence, but on his sincerity.

5th. We must observe, that when his friends encouraged him to hope for a temporal deliverance; Job despaired of it, and expected his bodily disorder would terminate in death: though in the increasing heat of the dispute they seem to drop this sentiment in their following answers, as if they supposed Job to be too bad for

for any favour from God; the good man however hoped, that his character would be cleared in the day of judgment, though he was greatly concerned it could not be cleared before.

6th. It also is worthy our observation, that after a life spent in the most conscientious performance of the divine commands, his reputation should sink in the opinion of his nearest friends; and his sufferings excite the reproaches of the ignorant and prophane upon his religious profession. These considerations touched him to the heart; exasperated all his sufferings, and caused him often to wish, that God would bring him to his trial here, in this life, that his integrity might be vindicated, and all friends and enemies might understand the true end and design of his sufferings, so that the honour of religion might be secured.

7th. In order to reconcile some passages which appear daring and presumptuous in mortal man, we must remember, that as he could only affirm his integrity, but could give no special satisfactory reason, why God should afflict him in a manner so very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding cases, that were ever known in the world; it very much perplexed and embarrassed his mind, and laid him under great disadvantage in the dispute. It is on their account that we find him so desirous of coming to a conference as it were with his Maker, to know his mind and meaning. Chap. xii. ver. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.* The whole 23d chapter relates to this point, in which he wishes he could come to the dwelling place of God, (ver. 3.) and spread his case before him, and argue it at large, (ver. 4.) for he had turned his thoughts every way and could make nothing of it, (ver. 8, 9.) only he was sure God knew he was an upright man, (ver. 10, 11, 12.) but (ver. 13.) he, that is, God is in one, supreme above all others, absolutely entire, keeping his mind and design to himself, and none can turn or oblige him to alter his resolution. All that we can say is, that he doth whatever is agreeable to his own wisdom, for (ver. 14.) what he hath resolved to inflict upon me, he hath accomplished, and many such things he doth, of which he will not assign to man the reason. To the same purpose are we to understand this expression chap. xxviii. 2. *He hath taken away my judgment*, that is, the rule by which I judge of my afflictions. This point, in reference to God, *Elihu* tells him, chap. 33, 13. he had urged to no purpose, *ſeeing he gives no account of his matters*, or will not reveal to us the secrets of his Providence.

8. In such a noble performance, as this Book has been allowed by the most learned and pious men in all ages; if any thing seems inconsistent or uncharacteristical, we should rather suspect our own judgment, and attribute the fault not to the writer, but our understanding, remembering that such sense best agrees with the subject or point in hand, which stands in the best connection with the context.

Having thus treated largely, and we humbly hope faithfully, on this much controverted Book, we submit our opinion to the judgment of the serious reader, and can only add, that if our endeavours in this point, shall tend to edify one believer in his most holy faith, respecting the infallible word of the ever blessed God; we shall not deem our work of labour and love in vain in the Lord.

APPENDIX

TO THE

HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK XII.

CONTAINING an account of the Writers and Subjects of the several Books in the Old Testament; a brief view of the Jewish ritual or ceremonial law; demonstration of the fulfilment of many Prophecies relative to the person, coming, and offices of the *Messiah*; the connection of the Old and New Testament, or harmony and agreement of the sacred Writers; excellency of the Scriptures, with a practical conclusion.

CHAP. I.

Of the Writers and Subjects of the several Books in the Old Testament, from the Pentateuch to the Prophecies.

The PENTATEUCH.

THAT *Moses* wrote the *Pentateuch* or five-fold volume, containing the five first books in the Bible, we have the same reason to believe, as we have that *Homer* wrote the Iliad; namely, the Consent of the Learned in all Ages.

The first of these books is *Genesis*, containing the only history of the world from the creation, down to *Jacob's* removing into Egypt for two thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight years.

2. *Exodus*, which is the history of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, and of the erecting and furnishing of the tabernacle.

3. *Leviticus*, in which are the laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Jewish religion, and what particularly related to the Levites.

4. *Numbers*, begins with the numbering of the Israelites, after which several laws and remarkable events are recorded.

5. *Deuteronomy* is a repetition and an abridgment of the law, with exhortations and motives to enforce the observations of it.

The

The Book of Joshua.

Joshua probably wrote the last chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and the book of *Joshua*, containing an account of his own acts, in conquering and dividing the land of Canaan; and *Phineas* the High-Priest might add the five last verses relating to the death of *Joshua*, and of his father *Eleazer* the High-Priest.

The Book of Judges.

This book was certainly written before the second book of *Samuel*; compare 2. *Sam.* xi. 21. with *Jud.* xi. 53. and before *David* had taken Jerusalem, 2 *Sam.* v. 6. *Jud.* i. 21. *Samuel* the Prophet or *Seer*, the last of the Judges was an historian, *Chron.* xxix. 29. and probably wrote the book of Judges. In it we learn the great efficacy of religion to make a nation happy, and the dreadful calamities which impiety brings on its votaries.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, points out some examples of heroic and surprisingly successful faith in *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Samson*, and *Jephthah*, whose history is recorded in this book. It consists of two parts, the one containing the history of the Judges from *Othniel* to *Samuel*, which part ends with the 16th chapter; the other recounting several memorable actions, performed not long after the death of *Joshua*, is thrown to the end of the book that it might not interrupt the thread of the history.

The Book of Ruth.

Ruth may be considered as an appendix to the book of *Judges*, and brings down the history to the times of *Samuel*, who probably was the author of it, and draws the lineage of *Judah* down to *David*, chap. iv. v. 18. &c. which renders it not unlikely that it was written after *David* was anointed by *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 13.

Here it may not be improper to observe, that *Samuel* was not only an author; but otherwise seems to have been a great promoter of literature and religion. We never read of the companies, or colleges of Prophets till this time, and therefore it is by no means improbable that he erected them. They were seminaries for the instruction of youth, in the knowledge of the law, and for training them up in the exercise of piety; particularly in the singing of sacred hymns, in concert with the instrumental musick.

This in the language of those times was prophesying, 1 *Sam.* x. 5. 1 *Chron.* i. 2, 3, 7. They were not strictly speaking all of them Prophets, but upon some of them God bestowed the spirit of prophecy, or of predicting future events, 2 *Kings*, ii. 3. And we may reasonably suppose that most of the Prophets, properly so called, came out of those schools.

Amos excepts himself, chap. vii. 14. *I was not a Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's son*, that is, Disciple; for the scholars were called,

the

the Sons of the Prophets. As their head or governor, they had some venerable, truly inspired Prophet who was called their father. *Samuel* was one, and perhaps the first of those fathers or governors, 1 *Sam.* xix. 20. *Elijah* was another, 2 *Kings* ii. 12. *Eliſha* came to *Gilgal—and the Sons of the Prophets were ſitting before him.* The master or father sat above, and the scholars below before him at his feet, 2 *Kings* ii. 3. *Knoweſt thou that the Lord will take away thy maſter from thy head?* or from the seat where he sat above thy head. See *Acts* xxii. 3.

They lived together in society, 2 *Kings* vi. 1. and when they had finished their lectures, and religious exercises, were wont to eat together with their masters, 2 *Kings* iv. 38.

This institution had a manifest tendency to advance religion and learning.

I. II. Samuel.

The first book of *Samuel* was written before the first of *Kings*, and it is not unreasonably supposed, that *Samuel* wrote the first twenty-four chapters; and that after his death, the history of *David* was continued in the first and second books of *Samuel*, by the Prophets *Gad* and *Nathan*, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29.

I. II. Kings.

These books contain the history of the kings of Judah and Israel, from *Solomon* to the captivity in Babylon, for the space of four hundred and twenty-three years.

In this period were several historians; for we read of the book of the acts of *Solomon*, 1 *Kings* xi. 14. which acts of *Solomon* were recorded in the book of *Nathan* the Prophet, and in the prophecy of *Ahijah* the Shilonite, and in the visions of *Iddo* the Seer, 2 *Chron.* ix. 29.

This *Iddo* was employed, together with *Shemaiah* the Prophet, in writing the acts of *Rehoboam*, 2 *Chron.* xii. 15. We also read of the book of *Jehu* the Prophet relating to the acts of king *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 *Chron.* xx. 34. And *Iſaiah* the Prophet wrote the acts of king *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 22. And also of king *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 32.

It is also highly probable, that he wrote the history of the intermediate kings *Jotham* and *Ahaz*, in whose reigns he lived, *Iſaiah* i. 1. And we may well suppose, that all these histories added together make the two books of Kings.

Observe———No writer of the history of the kings of Judah and Israel is any where expressly named, but his title is either given him as a prophet, or it appears from some other part of scripture, that he was a prophet. This quality of the writer was given to draw from us a proportionable respect, and induce us to receive the history with that reverence which is its due.

The Prophets were the Jewish historians; therefore to the historical books, *Joſhua*, *Judges*, 1. 2. *Samuel*, 1. 2. *Kings*, they give the

title of the *former Prophets*, as they gave the title of the *latter Prophets* to *Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c. &c.*

The Book of Psalms.

This book was composed by several authors, but chiefly by king *David*.

Moses composed the ninetieth psalm, when God had shortened the lives of the Israelites in the wilderness, as a punishment for their unbelief.

The hundred and thirty-seventh psalm was indited soon after their transportation to the land of Babylon, and captivity there; and the hundred and twenty-sixth upon their return out of it.

Others were composed upon other occasions, as may be seen in their titles (although those are not supposed to be of the same authority with the text) or collected from the sense or scope of the psalm.

The book of Psalms is divided into five parts. The first reaches to the end of the forty-first psalm: the second to the end of the seventy-second: the third to the end of the eighty-ninth: the fourth to the end of the one hundred and sixth: and the fifth to the end of the whole.

The whole may be deemed a collection of divine Odes, sublime and elegant, far beyond all human compositions, consisting of the loftiest celebrations of the divine praises; the most lively and fervent devotions of meditation, thanksgiving, prayer and supplication; faith, hope, and trust in God in every condition, and the most excellent instructions in every branch of piety and virtue.

The frequent reading of this book hath a strong tendency to establish in our minds the principles of true wisdom, even every right disposition towards God and man; and that purity of heart, and serenity of mind, which is a fund of comfort and joy in the ways of God, and will animate us to walk in them with steadiness and delight.

Moses was the first that composed sacred hymns that we read of, Ex. xv. *Deborah* the next, Judg. v. and then *Hannah*, 1 Sam. ii. But *David*, an admirable artist in music, carried divine poetry and psalmody to its perfection; and therefore is called *the sweet Psalmist of Israel?* Sam. xxiii. 1.

He, doubtless by divine authority, appointed the singing of psalms by a select company of skilful persons, in the solemn worship of the tabernacle, 1 Chron. vi. 31, which *Solomon* continued in the temple, 2 Chron. v. 12, 13.

Hence the people became well acquainted with the songs of *Sion*, and having committed them to memory, were famous for melodious singing among the neighbouring countries, Psal. cxxxvii. 3.

The continuance of this branch of divine worship is confirmed by the practice of our Lord and the instructions of the Apostle, Mat. xxvi. 30. Ephes. v. 19. Psalm-singing in short is a part of christian worship which ought to be supported, encouraged, and performed in the most skilful

skilful, harmonious and devout manner.

These, together with the book of *Job*, of which we have treated at large by itself, are the books that were written before the founding of *Solomon's* temple; proceed we therefore to a review of those authors, who wrote from that period to the destruction of the temple. Literature by this time had made a very considerable advance, probably by means of the schools of the Prophets.

Solomon was a great writer, as he was endowed with an uncommon share of wisdom and understanding. He spake three thousand Proverbs, and his Songs were a thousand and five. He spake of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he speak also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes. But of all his works only three are taken into the sacred canon.

PROVERBS.

This book consists of the most useful rules for the proper direction of life in religion and mortals, and is the most authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in antiquity. It may be divided into five parts.

In the first part the tutor gives his pupil admonitions, directions, cautions, and excitements to the study of wisdom, chap. 1st. to the 10th.

The second contains the Proverbs of *Solomon* properly so called, because delivered in distinct, independent, general sentences, chap. 10th to the 22d ver. 17th.

In the third, the tutor again addresseth himself to his pupil, and gives him fresh admonitions to the diligent study of wisdom, which is followed by a set of instructions, delivered in the imparative mood to the pupil, who is supposed, during that time, to be standing before him, chap. 22, 18. to chap. 25.

The fourth part is distinguished by its being a collection of *Solomon's* Proverbs, selected, we may suppose out of a much greater number, by the men of *Hezekiah;* perhaps by the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Hosea*, and *Micah*, who all flourished in the days of *Hezekiah*, and not improbably assisted him in his pious endeavours to restore true religion, 2 Chron. xxxi. 20. 21.

This part, as the second, consists chiefly of distinct, unconnected sentences, and reaches from chap. xxv. to chap. xxx.

The fifth part contains a set of wise observations and instructions, which *Agur*, the son of *Jakeh*, delivered to his pupils, *Ithiel* and *Ucal*, chap. xxx. The xxxi. chapter contains the precepts which his mother, possibly a Jewish woman, married to some neighbouring prince, delivered to *Lemuel* her son; being passionately solicitous to guard him against vice, to establish him in the principles of justice, and to have him espoused to a woman of the best qualities.

These two chapters are a kind of Appendix to the Book of Proverbs. It is uncertain who *Agur* and the mother of *Lemuel* were.

ECCLE-

Ecclesiastes.

This book was written by the *Preacher*, the son of *David*, king of Jerusalem, chap. i. 1. That is to say, by *Solomon* (probably in the latter part of his life) the subject of it is, an enquiry into the chief good or happiness of man in this world.

1st. He confutes the false opinion of those that place happiness in human wisdom or philosophy; the pleasures, amusements, or splendor of life; in honour, magistracy, and dominion; in riches or wealth; this in the first six chapters.

2d. He teaches, that true felicity is to be founded only in a serious regard to God and religion in the six last chapters.

In both parts he intermixes several incidental reflections, which tend to make us both wise and pious.

The whole is admirably adapted to draw us from the inordinate pursuit of earthly things, and from a wrong, to a lawful use of them, without any offence to God, or damage to ourselves, till we arrive at a never dying felicity.

The Song of Solomon.

The Song of *Solomon*, or the most excellent song, was composed by Solomon; and it is a noble Epithalamium, or marriage-song, of the pastoral kind, embellished with the most grand and beautiful images.

In the letter it is allowed to be a celebration of the marriage of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter; but the Jewish rabbies, and many of the christian fathers, have understood it as a spiritual allegory, representing the love of God, or according to christians, of Christ, to his church, which, in other parts of scripture, is represented as his spouse, Psalm xlv. 10, &c. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, &c. ver. 13. The king's daughter is all glorious within, &c.

This psalm *David* is thought to have composed upon the same occasion, namely at Solomon's marriage; wherein, as the bridegroom is justly supposed to be Christ; so his bride may well be supposed to be the church.

John Baptiſt compares Christ to a bridegroom, John iii. 28, 29. And so doth our Lord himself, Matt. ix. 15. The kingdom of Heaven he compares to a sumptuous marriage feast, Matt. xxii. 2.

So also, Rev. xix. 17, xxi. 2. the marriage of the lamb to his bride or wife, cloathed in fine linen, (which doubtless represents the christian church, in a state of purity) is spoken of St. *Paul*, in strong terms, such as *Adam* used when he was married to *Eve*, represents Christ as a husband to the church, Eph. v. 25. So also 2 Cor. xi. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.*

God is frequently set forth in the Prophets as the husband or bridegroom to the church, Isa. liv. 5. lxi. 10. Jer. iii. 20. Hosea, ii. 7. 16. 19. Hence, apostacy from God, very commonly represented as whoredom and adultery, both in the Old and New Testament.

All

All this is very just, and supplieth very instructive and comfortable meditations; the best use therefore we can make of this elegant song is, thus to apply it to spiritual purposes. But the ideas which the scriptures gives us of God, or Christ's relation to the church, as a husband, are too general to serve as a key to the great variety of particulars in this poem, which therefore, as it is never quoted in any other part of scripture, can be reduced to no certain rule of interpretation; but must be left to every serious person's private judgment.

Within this period were also written the Prophecies of *Joel*, *Amos*, *Hoſea*, *Jonah*, *Iſaiah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Obadiah*. These before the captivity. During the seventy years captivity; *Lamentations*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Eſther*. After the captivity, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, 1 and 2 Chronicles. These complete the Canon of the Old Testament.

As it is of great use to the right understanding of the Prophets, to know the reigns and times in which they prophesied, and the particular occasions upon which any of them delivered their prophecies, we shall attempt to digest and range them in chronological order.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Prophets before the Captivity.

ABOUT twenty-six years after the death of *Eliſha* the Prophet, 2 Kings, xiii. 20. Jonah *the ſon of* Amittai, *the Prophet which was of* Gatheper, was sent by God with a message of encouragement and success to *Jeroboam* the second, king of Israel, 2 Kings, xiv. 25. This might happen when *Jonah* was about twenty-eight years of age.

JOEL. i. ii. iii.

Joel at Jerusalem (Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.) might prophecy before *Amos* at Samaria, Amos i. 1, 4. for Amos. chap. iv. 7, 9. may refer to the devastation by *Palmer*-Worms, &c. and drought which Joel predicted, chap. i. 6, 7, 19, 20. However, as the sense of this prophecy in no part depends upon the time when it was delivered, there can be no impropriety in supposing that Joel prophesied about this time.

AMOS i. 9.

Some time after Joel, *Amos* might begin to prophecy in the kingdom of Israel. It is certain that he did prophesy in the days of *Uzziah* or *Azariah* king of Judah, in which they were cotemporaries, chap. i. 1. How long he continued is not intimated. He had no regular education in the schools of the Prophets,

(which supposeth that other Prophets had) but was originally a herdsman and *a gatherer of ſycamore fruits*, or wild figs, chap. vii. 14. He had an express commission from God to prophecy unto his people Israel, v. 15. This book may consist of several distinct discourses, but as they are without date, we cannot assign the particular times in which they were delivered.

HOSEA 1, 2, 3.

Hoſea is justly supposed to have been cotemporary with *Amos*. He prophesied against the ten tribes, or the kingdom of Israel, beginning in the reign of Jeroboam the second, and prophesying in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. He predicted the captivity of the ten tribes; and as that captivity happened in the sixth year of Hezekiah, probably he lived to see it accomplished by Shalmanezer king of Assyria, which was effected about 64 years after the commencement of his prophetic office.

This Prophet is commanded to take unto him *a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms*, chap. i. 2. This might all be transacted in a vision, in the *council of God*. See the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of *Ezekiel*. As it might be a parable, to be spoken as such to the children of Israel. See *Ezekiel* xxiv. 3. &c. where that is ordered to be done as a fact, which was only to be spoken as a parable. But if the Prophet did really marry a lewd woman, who had children not by him, but by some other man, this was no sin in him, who did it by divine command, in order to explain to the Israelites, their wickedness and the punishment of it.

The adulterous wife represented the Israelites, who by their idolatries had gone a whoring from God, their own husband. The children which this woman bare are the ruinous effects of the idolatry of the children of Israel: the first bastard was called Jezreel, and denoted the vengeance which God would take upon the house of Jehu, for the blood which he shed in Jezreel, chap. i. 4. The second was called Loruhamah, to denote that God would no longer spare the house of Israel, but take them quite away out of their land. The name of the third was Loammi, which signifies that the relation between God and the Israelites was dissolved.

The Interregnum in Israel, preceding the reign of *Zechariah*, was doubtless a time of very great disorder and violence, and of much bloody strife for the crown. Probably *Zechariah* gained it by cutting off competitors. *Shallum* slew him, *Menahem* slew *Shallum*, and all within the space of seven months.

To this sad state of things *Hoſea* may well be supposed to refer, chap. iv. 2. *By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.* Here therefore we may place the fourth chapter of Hosea.

JONAH

JONAH, 1, 2, 3, 4.

Jonah is supposed by divines, to have been sent about the second year of *Menahem*, king of Israel, and about the seventieth year of his age, to cry against Nineveh, then a great, wealthy, populous and haughty city, the chief seat of the Assyrian empire, and the mistress of the world, which had long been remarkable for luxury and debauchery. By *Zephaniah* it is called *the rejoicing*, or joyous city, chap. ii. 15.

To be sent with a message of divine wrath, to such a place as this, could not but seem a frightful and dangerous errand to Jonah, he saw how much the Isaaelites, God's own people hated and persecuted the Prophets, who reproved and threatened them. What then could he expect from that great and wicked city Nineveh, the head quarters of pride and sin? Further, he knew the Prophets, very much hazarded their reputation in the world, when employed in denouncing judgments; because God being gracious, was slow in executing them.

On this account the Prophets at Bethel and Jerusalem were vilely abused and decried by insolent and rude infidels, who durst even profess to *desire*, or long for *the day of the Lord*, (Amos, v. 18.) in a confident persuasion, that it would never come, and dared to challenge the Almighty to hasten his work. (Isaiah v. 19. If this should be Jonah's case, at Nineveh, what could he expect, but to be torn in pieces for an impostor? How must he, and the religion he professed, be exposed to public scorn and contempt?

This was what he particularly dreaded, chap. iv. 2. He was therefore resolved *to flee from the presence of* Jehovah, that is, to retire to some remote country beyond the sea.

But he was stopt by a miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful message, *Yet forty days, and* impenitent *Nineveh shall be overthrown.* Convinced of his miraculous mission, the king proclaimed a fast, and enjoined all the usual form of repentance; *and God repented of the evil, which he had said he would do unto them.*

It is very propable that the idolatrous Priests, the astrologers, soothsayers, and magicians, who must be numerous at Nineveh, as well as at Babylon, (Isai. xlvii. 13. Dan. ii. 2.) would zealously endeavour to divert the king; when the first fright was over, from attending to a message from Jehovah as soon as they possibly could, before the forty days were expired. They would naturally represent Jonah to the king and all the people as an impostor, and insinuate to them, that the prediction was false and would not be fulfilled.

This must give the Prophet, who was zealous for the glory of the God of Israel very great uneasiness, insomuch that he wished for death, chap. iv. 23. as Elijah in a case somewhat similar, had done before him, 1 Kings xix. 4.

The question of Jehovah, Jonah vi. 4. which we render, *Dost thou well to be angry?* Should have been rendered, *Art thou very much grieved?*

Pul

Pul the king of Assyria, who came against the land of Israel in the reign of Menahem, 2 King xv. 19. is supposed by archbishop Usher to be king of Nineveh to whom Jonah was sent. As it appears from the history, that *Pul* then had no design to make a conquest of the land of Israel; we can assign no reason, why he should march his army over the kingdom of Assyria, which lay to the extent of about three hundred miles, between his dominions, and the land of Canaan, to strike at Israel, but that he did it in revenge for the supposed insult which Jonah had offered to him and his people.

Isaiah vi. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Isaiah, the brightest luminary of the Jewish church, justly called the evangelical Prophet, because he speaks so much and so clearly of Christ, began to prophecy in the year king Uzziah died, chap. vi. 1. and prophesied in Judah in the successive reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He was certainly alive and prophesied, when Merodah Baladen sent his embassy to Hezekiah in the 14th year of his reign and before Christ, 714, hence it evidently follows, that he prophesied forty-six years.*

The first chapter, by reason of the grand and spirited exordium might be judged proper to stand in the front of the book; but it gives such an account of the distressed, desolate condition of the land of Judah, as agrees much better with the wicked and afflicted reign of the apostate Ahaz, than the flourishing circumstances of the country in the reigns of Uzziah, and of his son and successor Jotham, who were both in the main good princes; compare Isai. i. 7, 8, 9. with 2 Chron. xxvi. 1 to 16, and the whole subsequent chapter. But the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this Prophecy, do describe, and exactly correspond with a state of national wealth and prosperity, which are usually attended with pride, arrogance, and luxury. See Chap. ii. 6 to 18. iii. 16 to 25. Therefore it is presumed that this is the order of those chapters.

In the sixth chapter, and in the year before Christ 759, the Prophet, in the council of God received his commission; and soon after delivered the contents of the second, third, fourth and fifth chapters, which contain all that remains of his Prophecies, in the reign of Uzziah and Jotham, for about the space of sixteen years, till the first year of king Ahaz.

Micah, 1, 2.

These two chapters were delivered before the destruction of Samaria, which is here predicted, chap. i. 6. in the reign of Jotham, chap. i. 1.

* There is an ancient tradition, that Isaac suffered martyrdom, some time after this date, by being cruelly sawn asunder, to which the author of the Hebrews is supposed to refer, Heb. xi. 57. but it is not sufficiently authenticated to be offered as a matter of fact.

and

and therefore may be properly placed about this time.

ISAIAH 7.

In the first year of Ahaz, king of Judah; Rezin, king of Assyria, and Pekah, king of Israel, formed a design of dethroning Ahaz, and extirpating the family of David, by setting up the son of Tabeal, some potent factious Jew, to be king of Judah. Therefore having no design upon the nation, but the royal family, they marched directly to Jerusalem, and laid close siege to it.

But as it was the will of God not to extirpate the family of David, and only to punish wicked Ahaz, he sent Isaiah to encourage him to make a vigorous defence, and to assure him, that they should not prevail against him; and that the house of David should subsist till the coming of the Messiah. Then was the Prophecy to Ahaz contained in the seventh chapter of Isaiah.

Chap. 8, 9, 10 to the 5 Verse.

Ahaz, a wicked idolater, had little regard to what Isaiah had spoken to him, in the name of the Lord. Therefore God commanded the Prophet to take a large roll of parchment, and therein, with the pen of a man, that is, in the common and most legible manner of writing, to put down, and publish, what God should farther discover about the present deliverance and future calamities of Judah.

The roll was to be a comment upon the name of a son, which was then born to the Prophet, and by divine direction was called *Maher-ſhalalhaſh-baz*, that is, *make ſpeed to the ſpoil, and haſten to the prey*; denoting the speedy destruction of the two confederate kings of Samaria and Damascus. This roll we presume, takes in the eighth and ninth chapters of Isaiah, and the five first verses of the tenth chapter.

Chapter seventeenth relates to the same subject, the destruction of Israel and Damascus, and therefore seems to have been delivered in the same year, after the roll was finished; for, about two years after, *Tiglath-Pileſer*, king of Assyria, took Damascus, and carried the people therein captives to Kir, 2 Kings xvi. 9.

Chapter first, *Pekah* and *Rezin*, failing in their attempt upon Jerusalem, the next year, seven hundred and forty-one, they returned with forces better disciplined, and councils better concerted; and dividing themselves into three bodies, one under *Pekah*, another under *Rezin* and a third under *Zichri, a mighty man of* Ephraim; they fell upon the country in three different parts, making every where terrible havock and slaughter, and carrying away a prodigious number of captives. See 2 Chron. xxviii. 5 to 9.

No sooner was the land free from those enimies, than it was invaded by the Edomites on the south, and the Philistines on the west, who behaved with the same cruelty, slaying, plundering, and carrying away captives. See 2 Chron. xxviii. 17, 18, 19.

Thus was Judah grievously distressed throughout the whole country, and

brought exceeding low, though lately so opulent and powerful, because the inhabitants and their king had forsaken the Lord their God. Upon this occasion, most probably, Isaiah delivered the prophetic discourse, contained in the first chapter, as it is very suitable to the state of the nation at that time.

Chapter twenty-eight, relating to the destruction of Ephraim, or the ten tribes, without any mention of Syria or Damuscus, lies between the destruction of Damascus, and the captivity of the ten tribes.

Hosea, 5, 6.

Ahaz, greatly distressed by Pekah, Rezin, &c. called in Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria to his help, 2 Kings xvi. 7. and Menahem, king of Israel, several years before, had hired Pul, king of Assyria, to confirm the kingdom in his hand, 2 Kings xv. 19. though they reaped no benefit from them.

These are the only times in which the kings of Judah and Israel applied to the Assyrians for assistance; and as Hosea mentions both these applications, the fifth and sixth chapters must be taken in after Ahaz had applied to Tiglath-pileser.

Isaiah, 14, &c.

The Philistines triumphed over Israel all the days of Ahaz; but in the year Ahaz died, Isaiah delivered the burden or message to them, chap. xiv. 28, &c. which was fulfilled by Hezekiah, son and successor to Ahaz.

Chapters 15 and 16, the Moabites had not treated the Israelites well, who fled for shelter from the ravages of Pekah and Rezin. With this inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, Isaiah xvi. 3, 4. but now they are told, the oppression and spoils were ceased, and the throne of Hezekiah, should *be eſtabliſhed in mercy, and he ſhould ſit upon it in truth, &c.* Therefore this prophecy against Moab must have been delivered about the beginning (perhaps in the second year) of Hezekiah's reign.

It is supposed, by a learned divine, to have been accomplished by Shalmanezer, three or four years after, when, according to his opinion, Shalmanezer, previous to the siege of Samaria, subdued the Moabites, to prevent any incursions and attacks from that quarter.

Hosea, Chapters 7 and 14.

The Prophecies contained in these chapters were delivered (1) after Ephraim, or the king of Israel, had called to Egypt for succour, chap. vii. 11.

The only time they applied to Egypt was, when king Hosea, revolting from Shalmanezer, sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, 2 Kings xvii. 4. which occasioned Shalmanezer's besieging Samaria, and carrying the ten tribes into captivity; therefore these chapters might be delivered about three years before that event.

(2) These

(2) These Prophecies were delivered after the first year of Shalmanezer, who according to an eminent Chronologer began to reign in the year before Christ 728 or 729: for the Prophet Hosea refers to the destruction of Beth-arbel by Shalman, chap. x. 14. and they were delivered before the taking of Samaria, which was in the eighth year of Shalmanezer, before Christ 721; for the Prophet evidently in those chapters supposes that Ephraim, or the ten tribes, were not yet carried into captivity; therefore they were delivered after the destruction of Beth-arbel, and before the captivity of the ten tribes, about the time above noted.

Micah, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

The last verse of the third chapter of *Micah*, was uttered in the time of Hezekiah, Jer. xxvi. 13. and here may that chapter, and all that follow be placed, as prophesied in some time of Hezekiah's first thirteen years, before Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem; for the Prophet seems to speak of that siege, and Sennacherib's blasphemy, chap. v. 1, 5. He speaks glorious things of Christ and his kingdom, and names the very town where he should be born, chap. v. 2.

In chap. iv. 1, 2, 3. he uses the very words of Isaiah, chap. ii. 2, 3, 4. to express the conflux to the kingdom of Christ, his power in it, and the peace which at length it would give the world.

Nahum, Chapters, 1, 2, 3.

After Shalmanezer, king of Nineveh, had taken Samaria, and carried the ten tribes captives, *Nahum* might predict the ruin of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire.

Isaiah, Chap. 23.

Shalmanezer, having taken Samaria, turned his arms against the city of Tyre, which sustained his attack five years, and then was delivered from the siege by means of his death.

By this success they were too much elated, and growing very insolent, this occasioned the prophecy against them in this chapter, which foretells the miserable overthrow of Tyre that was effected by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Isaiah, Chapters 24, 25, 26, 27.

These chapters may refer to the final desolation of Judea and Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar; but we can discover no marks of the time when they were delivered. However, with the threatenings, he mixes many gracious promises and comforts.

Isaiah, Chapters 38, 39.

In this year king Hezekiah fell sick, and the other affairs happened that are recorded in this chapter, for fifteen years are added to Hezekiah's life, chap. 38, 5. and as he reigned in

in all twenty-nine years; this must have been in the fourteenth year of his reign; and that it happened when the intentions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, to attack Jerusalem were known, appears from Isaiah xxxviii. 6.

Isaiah, Chapters, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

Hezekiah, having refused to pay the annual tribute to the king of Assyria, towards the end of the fourteenth year, Sennacherib came upon him with a numerous army, and he therefore prepared for a vigorous defence, 2 Kings xviii. 13. Isaiah xxxvi. 6. Particularly he entered into an alliance with the king of Egypt and Ethiopia, 2 Kings xviii. 21. Isaiah xxxvi. 6.

This was a measure displeasing to God, and therefore protested against by his Prophet Isaiah in the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters, and at the same time, all the other chapters, from the twenty-ninth to the thirty-sixth chapter, especially those that have immediate reference to this invasion, might have been dictated to the Prophet by the Spirit of God.

Isaiah, Chap. xxii. v. 1 to 15.

As in this paragraph there are manifest allusions to Sennacherib's invasion, and Hezekiah's preparations for the defence of Jerusalem, (compare v. 9, 10, 11. 2 Chron. xxxii. 5, 30.) this prophetic admonition to the people, who depended too much upon these preparations, probably were delivered about this time.

Isaiah, Chap. xxi.

The inhabitants of Kedar were the descendants of Ishmael, Gen. xxx; 13. and were one species of Arabians dwelling in Arabia Petræa. These were to be ruined within a year after this prophecy was given out. Most propably they were overthrown either by Sennacherib as he went into or returned out of Egypt again, or by Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, as he advanced out of Egypt against Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 9. and therefore this Prophecy may be placed at this time, or within a year or two of it.

Isaiah, Chap. 20.

Hezekiah, having treated with Sennacherib, and agreed to pay him a sum of money, 2 Kings xviii. 14, 15, 16. that prince turned his arms against Egypt, which he greatly distressed for three years together, Isaiah xx. 3, 4. But he first sent Tartan one of his generals, before him to take Ashdod the key to Egypt. At this time the prophecy against Egypt in this chapter was delivered. Observe, Sennacherib in ver. 1. is called Sargon, and it is said ver. 5. *they, that is the Jews, shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.*

Isaiah, Chap. 18 and 19.

These chapters are also levelled against Egypt and Ethiopia, upon which the Jews relied too much; and therefore might be delivered about the same time.

Isaiah x. v. 5, &c. 11, 12, 13, 14, to v. 28.

It appears from chap. x. 8 to 12. which is *a Prosopopeia* or supposed speech of the king of Assyria, that this chapter was delivered after the taking of Samaria by Shalmanezer 721, and some time before Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem after the taking of Samaria. The speech in this place bearing an affinity to that of Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 10 to 14, Isaiah xxxvii. 10 to 14, it is probable that this and the other chapters to the 28th verse of the 14th chapter were delivered about the time that Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem, observe chap. x. v. 11. *Shall I not as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?* Here he speaks as king of Assyria, and so takes in what his father Shalmanezer had done as if done by himself.

Isaiah, Chap. 36, 37.

Sennacherib returning out of Egypt where he had been three years, notwithstanding the agreement of peace, which he made with Hezekiah, marched his army again into Judea, laid siege to Lachish, and from thence sent three of his generals with a proud and blasphemous message to Jerusalem, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18. This event with the circumstances which attended and followed it, are recorded in the 36th and 37th chapters of this Prophecy.

Observe, before Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem, Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, advanced against him out of Egypt, 2 Kings xix. 9. But as the Prophet Isaiah had predicted, did the Jews no service, for he was overthrown by Sennacherib, who after that returned to Jerusalem where his army, consisting of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, were all miraculously destroyed in one night.

Isaiah, Chap. 40, 41, 42, 43, to the End of the Book.

As there is no direction to refer to those chapters, or any one of them to any particular time; they may be allotted to the eleven last years of Hezekiah's prolonged life.

Isaiah, xxii. v. 15, to the End.

Shebna had been secretary to king Hezekiah, and the pious Eliakim, master of his houshold, Isaiah 39, 3. Shebna by the questions, chap. xxii. 16, seems to have been a foreigner, and not well affected to the Jewish religion. *What hast thou to do here? And whom, what relations, hast thou here?* It is possible this Shebna, a man of great abilities might have had the tuition of the young king Manasseh, but twelve years old, and

the whole management of affairs, into his own hands; having ruined Eliakim by such arts as courtiers are wont to practice; for he was now both treasurer and master of the houshold. To this, perhaps the wicked conduct of Manasseh may be assigned.

Shebna, secure of the stability, and continuance of his power and grandeur, was hewing out a magnificent sepulchre for himself and heirs, to perpetuate his memory to all succeeding times. On this occasion, Isaiah might deliver this Prophecy, predicting Shebna's captivity and death, in a remote country, and the future exaltation of good Eliakim.

This, which would greatly exasperate Shebna, and might occasion Isaiah's being put to death, was fulfilled about twenty-two years after, when Shebna was taken captive with Manasseh by Esarhaddon, and carried to Babylon, where he continued during the remainder of his life; but Manasseh, upon his repentance, was restored to the throne of Judah; and probably the good Eliakim was restored and intrusted with the management of all his affairs, and assisted him in the great reformation he made in religion.

JEREMIAH, Chapters 1 and 2.

In the year 677 before Christ, and twenty-second of the reign of Manasseh, Jeremiah received his prophetic commission, as contained in the first chapter, and in the same year, probably he delivered the admonitions warnings and threatenings we read in the second.

JEREMIAH, Chapter 11, Verse 1, to 18.

The Prophet, verse 2 to 9, most probably refers to the covenant which Josiah publicly made to keep God's commandments, upon finding the book of the law, 2 Kings xxii. 11. This was in the eighteenth year of his reign, 2 Kings xxii. 3.

JEREMIAH, Ch. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, &c. to 21.

These chapters, for any thing that appears to the contrary, lie in regular order; nor have we any ground or intimation for transposing them.

There is a date, chap. iii. 6. In the days of Josiah, without mentioning the year of his reign, which however shews that the chapter was delivered in the same part of his reign.

And whereas a severe drought is frequently mentioned in several of these chapters, it shews that they are to be laid together in the same year, or years in which the drought continued; and all the rest to the twenty-first may follow in order of time, and might be delivered in the last years of king Josiah.

JEREMIAH, Ch. 11 Verse 18, to the End.

In some part of the same year the men of Anathoth might conspire against Jerusalem.

HA-

HABAKKUK, Ch. 1, 2, 3.
ZEPHANIAH, Ch. 1, 2, 3.

As these two Prophets prophesied the same things that Jeremiah did, and upon the same occasion, that is, destruction and desolation upon Judah and Jerusalem, because of the many heinous sins they were guilty of, so they might prophecy about this time.

JEREMIAH, chapter 22, verse 1, to 24.

The Prophet being sent of God to the king's house, there proclaimed God's judgments against him, and his family, contained in these verses of this chapter.

This was soon after Jehoahaz, or Shallum, was carried captive into Egypt, by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, who slew Josiah, verse 10, *Weep not for the dead, Josiah, but weep for him that goeth away, Jehoahaz; for he shall return no more.*

Note, Jehoahaz reigned but three months.

JEREMIAH chap. 26.

After that, the Prophet was commanded to go to the temple, and denounce to all the people the judgments of God, if they did not repent. By this he was brought into danger of his life, through the resentment of the Priests and Prophets, ver. 7, 8. but was preserved by the princes, ver. 16.

JEREMIAH, chap. 25.

In this chapter, and in the beginning of this year, Jeremiah prophesied of the coming of Nebuchadnezzar against Judah and Jerusalem.

JEREMIAH 35.

The Rechabites, upon Nebuchadnezzar's beginning to invade the land of Judea, retired out of the country to Jerusalem, where Jeremiah found them, in this chapter.

JEREMIAH, 46.

In the same year, after Nebuchadnezzar had defeated the army of Pharaoh-necho, this prophecy relating to the Gentiles was delivered.

JEREMIAH, ch. 36, ver. 1, to 9.

In the same year God commanded Jeremiah to collect and write in a roll, all the words of prophecy, which had been spoken by him against Israel and Judah, and against the nations.

This he executed with the assistance of Baruch his amanuensis, who, as Jeremiah was then under confinement, ver. 5. read the roll in the temple, upon the fasting-day, that is, the great day of atonement, being the tenth of the seventh month.

JER-

JEREMIAH, 45.

Baruch, being very much affrighted at the threats contained in the roll, and probably uneasy under apprehensions of the danger he might incur by reading it publicly; Jeremiah, by the divine command, delivered to him the message of encouragement contained in the chapter.

DANIEL, chapter 1.

Immediately after this, Nebuchadnezzar, who set out upon his expedition the year before, laid siege to Jerusalem, took it, and bound Jehoiakim in fetters, with a design to carry him to Babylon, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6.

But upon Jehoiakim's submission, he did not carry him thither, but restored him to the kingdom. Nevertheless, he carried great numbers of the people, and sons of the royal family, and of the nobility, captives, and among the rest Daniel.

JEREMIAH, Chap. 36. Verse 9, to the End.

The year after the Chaldeans were gone from Jerusalem, Jehoiakim and his people growing worse and worse, in the ninth month, at the fast, which was then proclaimed on accoun of Nebuchadnezzar's having takent the city the year before: Baruch again read the roll in the house of the Lord, which coming to the king's ear, and part of the roll being read to him; he thinking, perhaps, that Nebuchadnezzar had already executed the divine threatenings, that nothing more was now to be feared; and that the Prophet was a malicious, troublesome fellow, burnt the roll, and commanded Jeremiah and Baruch to be apprehended; but they could not be found, for the Lord concealed them.

Observe: Jeremiah was now at liberty.

DANIEL 2.

In this year, which was the second of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the Babylonish account, and the fourth according to the Jewish, Daniel revealed to Nebuchadnezzar his dream.

JEREMIAH, Chap. 22. Ver. 24, to the End.

In this year, this Prophecy was declared against Jehoiachin, or Coniah, who reigned but three months, and then, with many others, were carried away into captivity, 2 Kings xxiv. 11, &c.

His uncle, Zedekiah, succeeded him, 2 Kings xxiv. 17.

JEREMIAH, 23.

This chapter might be delivered at the same time with the foregoing prophecy.

JEREMIAH, chap. 13, ver. 15, to the End.

By the king and queen mentioned ver.

ver. 18, are probably meant Jehoiachin, and his mother. See chap. 22, ver. 26. 2 Kings, xxiv. 12.

Thus this prophecy must have been delivered about the same time with the foregoing.

JEREMIAH, 24.

After Jehoiachin, or Jechoniah was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, this prophecy was delivered.

JEREMIAH, Chap. 49, Ver. 34, to the End.

In this year also is to be placed the Prophecy against Elam, a kingdom upon the river Ulai, eastward, beyond the Tigris, in which stood Shushan, afterwards the metropolis of the kingdom of Persia.

JEREMIAH 29.

About the second year of Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah's letter, contained in this chapter, was sent to the captive Jews at Babylon, and an imperious answer returned by Shemaiah.

JEREMIAH, 30, 31.

These two chapters, which assure the captive Jews, that they should not only return again to Judea, but also be the particular care of the divine Providence to the end of the world; to shew the certainty of the encouraging contents, are ordered to be written in a book, chap. 30, verse 2, about the same time with the foregoing letter, and probably were sent to the captive Jews in Babylon, whom they principally respected.

JEREMIAH 27.

This chapter is to be placed in this year (see chap. 28, ver. 1.) namely, after the departure of Nebuchadnezzar out of Judea and Syria, when the kings of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Zidonians, Tyrians, &c. sent an embassy to Zedekiah, proposing to him a league against the king of Babylon.

Observe. In the first verse Jehoiakin is put for Zedekiah (see verse 3.) probably by a mistake of the transcriber, who might then have his eye upon the first verse of the foregoing chapter.

JEREMIAH 28.

In this year the affair concerning Hanamiah, the false Prophet, related in this chapter, was transacted.

Observe. The first verse, according to the best commentators, should be read thus, *When it had been so*, (that is, when I had continued prophesying with a yoke upon my shoulders from that year, which) *in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah until the fourth year, &c.*

JEREMIAH 50, 51.

These two chapters contain a book of Prophecies, which Jeremiah wrote, and sent to Babylon by Seraiah, who

was sent thither by Zedekiah, in the fourth year of his reign, chapters 51, 59.

EZEKIEL, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

In the fifth year of Jehoiakin's captivity, which was also the fifth of Zedekiah's reign, Ezekiel, a captive priest in Chaldea, received his prophetic commission in the council of God and had the revelations and prophecies contained in the seven first chapters of his book.

Observe. Ezekiel dates his prophecies from the year in which himself and king Jehoiakin was carried into captivity.

EZEKIEL, Chap. 8, 9, 10, 11.

This year Ezekiel in a vision was carried to Jerusalem, shewn the several sorts of idolatry practised there by the Jews, in the very temple, and had revealed unto him the punishments which God would inflict upon them for these abominations, and the divine protection of those in captivity, who continued stedfast and faithful to his worship and service.

EZEKIEL, Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

About this time, Zedekiah having entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt, and broke the solemn oath of fidelity, which he had sworn to king Nebuchadnezzar, God, both by types and words of revelation, foreshewed to Ezekiel, the taking of Jerusalem, by the Chaldeans. Zedekiah's flight by night, the putting out of his eyes, his imprisonment and death at Babylon, the carrying away of the Jews, and the remains of the Israelites contained in the above-mentioned chapter.

Observe. Daniel, though then but a young man, was grown to such a pitch of piety and holiness as to be compared by God himself with Noah, and Job, Ezekiel xiv. 14, 23.

EZEKIEL, 20, 21, 22, 23.

The elders of Israel came to Ezekiel to enquire of the Lord; but God refuses to be enquired of by such detestable hypocrites; and, in these four chapters, denounces the judgments, their abominable impieties deserved.

JEREMIAH, Chap. 21, 24. Verse 1 to 8.

Nebuchadnezzar having advanced with a great army against Judea, 2 Kings xxv. 1, to punish Zedekiah for perjury and rebellion, that prince first sent Pashur and Zephaniah to Jeremiah, to desire him to enquire of the Lord; by whom Jeremiah returned the answer related in the twenty-first chapter.

Afterward, Jeremiah was ordered in person to deliver to Zedekiah the prediction contained in chapter 24, ver. 1 to 8.

JEREMIAH 47.

Pharaoh-hophra, marched out of Egypt to the relief of his ally Zedekiah, against Nebuchadnezzar, who was advancing to his siege at Jerusalem, and in his way took Gaza, a town of the Philistines.

A little before this event, Jeremiah uttered this prophecy against the Philistines.

JEREMIAH, Chap. 48, 49, Verse 1 to 34.

These prophecies relating to the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. who would be obnoxious to the ravages of the Assyrian armies, might be delivered at the same time with the former.

EZEKIEL, Chap. 24, 25.

On the tenth day of the tenth month, in the same year when Nebuchadnezzar's army had laid siege to Jerusalem, the same was revealed on the very same day to Ezekiel in Chaldea, and the destruction of the city was typified by a boiling caldron. But vengeance is denounced against the neighbouring countries, that rejoiced in the preceding calamities, or should rejoice in those that were to come upon Judea, chapter 25.

JEREMIAH chapter 37. verse 1, to 11.

Not long after Nebuchadnezzar's army had laid siege to Jerusalem, Pharoah-hophra came, with a great force to the relief of Zedekiah, upon which Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege of Jerusalem, in order to march against him. Zedekiah sent a message to Jeremiah, before he was put into prison, chap. 37. ver. 4. the answer to which is contained in chap. 37. ver. 1 to 11.

JEREMIAH chap. 34. ver. 1 to the end.

Upon the approach of Nebuchadnezzar's army, the terrified Jews, entered into a solemn covenant, to observe God's laws, and to release the Hebrew servants, which they kept in bondage, contrary to the law.

But when the Chaldeans were gone to meet Pharaoh, the general opinion being, that they would return no more; the Jews openly violated the covenant of reformation, by obliging all their servants to return to their former servitude; for which impious act, the Prophet proclaimed, *Liberty to the sword, &c.*

JEREMIAH, chapter 37. verse 11 to 16.

When the Chaldeans were gone to meet Pharaoh, Jeremiah was released out of prison, and intending to retire to Anathoth from the calamities of the

the siege, which he knew would be renewed, was taken up for a deserter, as he was passing through the gate, and clapt into prison, but principally for insisting that the city should again be besieged, and taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

JEREMIAH, ch. 32, 33.

While Jeremiah was in prison, the contents of these chapters were transacted.

EZEKIEL, chap. 29. ver. 1 to 17. 30.

Upon the approach of the Chaldeans, the Egyptians treacherously deserted Zedekiah, and returned to their own country. Upon this occasion Ezekiel denounces the displeasure of God against their perfidy, predicts their desolation, and at length (within forty years, chap. 29. ver. 13.) their being reduced to one of the basest nations, insomuch that they should no more have a prince of their own to reign over them (chap. 30. ver. 13.) which hath been remarkably fulfilled, even to this day.

JEREMIAH, chapter 37. verse 17 to the end.

On the retreat of the Egyptians, Nebuchadnezzar returned to the siege of Jerusalem; and it was then king Zedekiah, fearing the issue, sent for Jeremiah, out of prison, to consult him.

JEREMIAH, chap. 38. ver. 1 to 14.

The princes, offended at Jeremiah, cast him in a low loathsome dungeon, where he must have perished, had not Ebed-melech gained leave to draw him out, and to place him in a better situation in the court of the prison.

JEREMIAH, Ch. 39. ver. 15, to the End.

While Jeremiah was in the court of the prison, God by him sent a message of mercy and deliverance to Ebed-melech.

JEREMIAH, Ch. 38, ver. 14, to the End.

Zedekiah again sent for Jeremiah out of the court of the prison into the temple, there secretly to enquire of him concerning the issue of the siege.

EZEKIEL, Ch. 26, 27, 28.

Here God declares his judgments against Tyre, for insulting the calamitous state of Jerusalem, closely besieged by Nebuchadnezzar.

Observe the wisdom of Daniel, who though only about thirty-six, was become famous over all the East, chap. 28. ver. 3.

EZEKIEL, Ch. 31.

God declares his judgments against Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

JE-

Jeremiah, Ch. 39. ver. 1 to 11. Ch. 52. ver. 1 to 30.

The account of Jerusalem's being taken, with the subsequent circumstances. Upon this occasion the hundred and thirtieth psalm was composed.

Jeremiah, Ch. 39. ver. 11 to 13. Ch. 40. ver. 1 to 7.

Nebuchadnezzar gives charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan, who treats him in a kind and friendly manner.

Jeremiah, Chap. 40. ver. 7 to the End. Chap. 41, 42, 43. ver. 2 to 8.

Nebuchadnezzar makes Gedaliah governor of Judea. Ishmael slays him. Johanan, &c. by force carries Jeremiah into Egypt.

CHAP. III.

Prophets during the captivity. Remarks upon that event.

Jeremiah, Chap. 43. ver. 8 to the End. Ch. 44.

THE Prophecies contained in these chapters were revealed and published to the Jews, in the land of Egypt.

The Book of Lamentations.

This book, which mournfully bewails the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple, was composed by Jeremiah, after that disastrous event, possibly in the land of Egypt, where Jeremiah might end his days; for we never read of his return from thence.

Ezekiel, Ch. 33.

The beginning of this chapter is upon a general subject, and of uncertain date. From the twenty-first verse it is dated from the time when Ezekiel first received the news of the city's being taken and destroyed, which was eighteen months, or a year and an half, after the said event happened.

Ezekiel, Ch. 32.

This prophesy against Egypt was delivered in this year and month.

Ezekiel, Chapters 34, 36, 37, 38, 39.

These chapters fall under no date till we come to the fortieth, which is dated the twenty-fifth of Jehoiachin's captivity. Therefore these chapters were probably delivered some time between the twelfth and twenty-fifth of that captivity.

Obadiah.

Obadiah prophesied against the Edomites for their unnatural and spiteful

spiteful behaviour towards the Jews, in their distress, at the taking of Jerusalem.

EZEKIEL, Chap. 35.

This prophecy against the Edomites seems to have been delivered on the same occasion.

DANIEL, Chap. 3.

In this year also Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image.

EZEKIEL, Chap. 40, 41, &c. to the End of the Book.

All these visions and prophecies, relating to the future state of the church of God, were revealed to Ezekiel this year, being the fourteenth from the destruction of Jerusalem.

EZEKIEL, Chap. 29. Ver. 17. to the End.

Nebuchadnezzar's army, having endured great hardships in the siege of Tyre, which held thirteen years, and having acquired but little on its surrender (the inhabitants having conveyed themselves and their effects into the adjacent island) God, by the Prophet Ezekiel, promiseth them the spoils of Egypt, as a reward for their labour.

DANIEL, Chap. 4.

This year Nebuchadnezzar had the dream of the wonderful great tree, and the cutting down thereof; and the next year fell distracted.

JEREMIAH, Chapter 52. Verse 31. to the End.

This year Nebuchadnezzar died, and was succeeded by his son, Evil-merodach, who released Jehoiachin king of Judea, out of prison, where he had been confined thirty-seven years, and advanced him to his favour and friendship.

Observe. This last chapter was not written by Jeremiah, (See Ch. 51. Ver. 64.) but by Baruch, or Ezra, or whoever collected Jeremiah's prophecies into one volume.

DANIEL, 7.

Daniel had the vision of the four monarchies, and of the kingdom of the Messiah.

DANIEL, 8.

Daniel had the vision of the ram and he-goat.

DANIEL, 5.

Daniel reads the hand-writing on the wall. Belshazzar is slain, Darius the Mede took the Assyrian kingdom.

DANIEL, 6.

Daniel being advanced by Darius above all the princes, and made prime minister next to the king, raised so much envy against him among the courtiers,

courtiers, that they laid the snare for him, which brought him into the lion's den.

Daniel, 9.

Daniel apprehending from the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the seventy years captivity of Judea were drawing to an end, makes his prayer to God for the restoration of Jerusalem: in answer to which the Angel Gabriel was sent to assure him of a much greater redemption to the Jewish nation, by the Messiah, at the end of seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years.

Ezra, 1, 2.

Darius dies, Cyrus succeeds him, and by his decree put an end to the seventy years captivity of the Jews. This is in the first chapter of Ezra. In the second chapter, an account is given of the Jews that returned.

Observe, on the return of Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity, several of the other tribes of Israel returned with them, out of Assyria, Babylon and Media, whither they had been before carried, Ezra vi. 17. Upon this joyous occasion the 126th psalm was composed.

Ezra, 3.

The Jews begin to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

Remarks on the Babyloniſh Captivity.

THE whole Jewish nation, both Judah and Israel, had all along a strange propensity to idolatry, even after the erecting of the temple, and the establishing of the worship of God there in the most grand and solemn manner; they erected *altars to ſtrange gods,* frequented *high places and groves,* consecrated to idolatrous worship, and furnished themselves with idols and images for that purpose, 2 Chron. iii. 1. 1 Kings xv. 11, 12, 13.

Besides, their morals were as corrupt as their religion, even to the heinous degree of sodomy, to which they were led by the example of the Heathens. All the endeavours of pious kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, sent by special commission from God, were ineffectual to produce a reformation. The pious king Hezekiah was zealous and active in rooting out idolatry, but Manasseh his son and successor, restored it in the highest and most flagitious degree of profaneness and iniquity, even beyond that of the dark and ignorant nations; 2 Kings xxi. 1 to 10. *He built up again the high places which Hezekiah had deſtroyed.*

He was also a grievous persecutor of all that would not confirm to his idolatrous establishments, and *ſo ſhed innocent blood* very much. Amon his son followed his pernicious example, but Josiah his grandson, vigorously attempted a reformation. 2 Kings

xxiii.

xxiii. 24, 25, although the people never came heartily into it. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, &c.

Observe, the dreadful calamity consequent on these idolatrous practices came upon them gradually. First good king Josiah, was, in judgment upon the land, slain in battle by Pharaoh-necho, 2 Kings xxiii. 29. who put Jehoahaz that succeeded him, into chains, sent him prisoner into Egypt, and laid the land of Judah under a heavy tribute, 2 Kings xxiii. 23. Jehoiakim succeeded, and proved a wicked and idolatrous prince like most of his predecessors. In his third year, Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, and carried away part of the vessels, of the house of God, and many of the people into captivity. Particularly he gave orders to Ashpenaz *the master of the Eunuchs*, that he would make choice out of the children of the royal family, and of the nobility of the land, such as he found to be of the fairest countenance, and the quickest parts, to be carried to Babylon, and there made eunuchs in his palace, Daniel i. to 4. whereby was fulfilled Isaiah's prediction above an hundred years before, Isaiah xxxix. 7. Among these youths were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Dan. i. 6, 7. Moreover the king was made a tributary, and the whole land reduced to vassallage under the Babylonians.

A severe visitation! though it had not the proper effect upon Jehoiachin the next king, who was as corrupt as his father, 2 Kings xxiv. 8, 9. He had been but three months on the throne, when Nebuchadnezzar again besieged and took Jerusalem, with the king and all the royal family; all the most valuable things in the temple, and in the king's treasures, with all the mighty men of valour, all the craftsmen and smiths, he took away, leaving none in the land but the poorest sort. 2 Kings xxvi. 12, 13, 14. Among the rest, Ezekiel (chap. i. ver. 1, 2.) and Mordecai, (Esther ii. 5, 6,) were now carried captives: Yet still there was no amendment of the religion or morals of the nation. Zedekiah, the next and last king, was as bad as his predecessors. 2 Kings xxiv. 18, 19. In about eleven years, Nebuchadnezzar, after a long and close siege, took Jerusalem, broke down its walls, burnt the city and temple, carried away all the sacred utensils, and all the people except a few of the very poorest to till the ground, and reduced the whole land of Judea, in a manner, to utter desolation for the sins thereof.

The propriety of this dispensation will appear, if we consider, 1st, That the lenity of God was evident in bringing this terrible overthrow upon them so gradually, after a succession of judgments from less to greater, for the space of twenty-two years which should have been a warning to them, and by experience have convinced them, that the threatenings denounced by the Prophets would certainly be executed,

2dly, That it was a just punishment for their sins; particularly of their idolatry, whereby they forsook God, and therefore God justly forsook them, and delivered them into the hands

hands of their enemies as Moses had foretold, Leviticus xxvi. 30, &c.

3dly, This dreadful calimity was the most effectual means to work their reformation, which was the end proposed by divine wisdom. Now, in their captive, disconsolate state, they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a disposition to reflect upon the long series of iniquity and perverseness, which had subjected them to the heaviest of God's judgments.

Now *their own wickedneſs corrected them, and their back-ſlidings reproved them; now they know and ſee, that it was an evil thing, and bitter, that they had forſaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them, Iſaiah* ii. 19.

In the land of their captivity, the sermons of the Prophets, declaiming with the highest authority against prophane and vicious practices, would still be sounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the consequence of such practices, would sink deep into their hearts, and thereby give them an utter detestation of what they well knew was the cause of all their grievous sufferings.

They had suffered themselves to be shamefully infatuated by their false Prophets, who had prophesied to them in the name of Baal, as the most infallible oracle, Jer. ii. 8. They were Prophets *of the deceit of their hearts. Jer.* xxiii. 26.

They had encouraged a rabble of *diviners, dreamers, enchanters,* and *ſorcerers,* who had most impudently imposed upon their credulity, assuring them, in the name of the Lord, that they should not serve the king of Babylon, Jeremiah xxvii. 9. that he should not come against them, nor against the land, 37, 39. *They belied the Lord and ſaid, it is not he, neither ſhall evil come upon us: neither ſhall we ſee ſword nor famine, Jer.* v. 12.

Thus they caused the people to err, and their kings, princes, and priests concurred to strengthen the delusion. These Prophets and Priests were men of very wicked lives, Zep. iii. 4. *They committed adultery, walked in lies, ſtrengthened the hands of evil doers,* so that none returned from wickedness, Jer. xxiii. 14.

They persecuted and murdered the just in the midst of Jerusalem, Lam. iv. 13. From them profaneness went forth into all the land, Jer. xxiii. 15. See a more particular description of the wickedness of the land, Ezek. xxii. 6 to 13.

But now where are all their false Prophets, with all their bold pretensions and flattering promises? The delusion is now at an end, and they find themselves most miserably deceived. Their eyes are opened and they are thoroughly convinced, that they were a set of the vilest impostors, who had deluded them into the most wretched circumstances.

The Prophets were now become wind, Jer. v. 13. and in proportion as these deceivers were detested, the true Prophets, who would have drawn them to a just regard of God and his holy law, would be esteemed and honoured.

Doubtless the lying Prophets and Priests had filled their heads with specious pretences for the idolatrous practices, and assured them, they were still the beloved people of God, invested with all the distinguishing privileges of his church and peculiar people, and secure under his protection, with great ostentation and confidence, crying out *the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these* [men or buildings.] Jer. vii. 4.

But now they found all their sophistry to be lying words, and could no longer take assurance from their peculiar privileges, or their magnificent temple, when their temple and city were both destroyed, and themselves cast into a heathen land, where they were so long and so shamefully stript of all their peculiar honours.

In short, no method could have been devised more proper to give this people a fixed detestation of idolatry, and the vile arts by which they were seduced into it; and it had this remarkable effect; they never more fell into idolatry, but retain the greatest abhorrence of it unto this day.

4thly. The law of God, written by Moses, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs civil and religious, and the ground of their happiness, they had so far neglected, that once it was almost unknown, and lost among them. 2 Kings xxii. 8 to 12 This contempt of the divine law, the Prophets had frequently and strongly protested against, and publickly declared it would prove their ruin.

Therefore in their ruined state this must be remembered, as the primary reason of all their sufferings, and they must be thoroughly sensible, that a due regard to the law of God was the only way to recover his favour, and their own prosperity, and accordingly must be disposed to be attentive to it; for Ezra, after the captivity, found so little difficulty in introducing the public reading of the law, that the people themselves called for it, Neh. viii. 1, 2, 3, &c. Ezra was a ready writer of the law of God, Ezra vii. 6, &c. and active in propagating the knowledge of it.

Doubtless he wrote, or directed to be written, several copies of the law to be dispersed into proper hands; and whereas before the captivity they had no synagogues for public worship and instruction, nor any places to resort to for either, unless the temple at Jerusalem, or the cities of the Levites, or to the Prophets, when God was pleased to send them; thus ignorance grew among the people, but after the captivity, synagogues were erected among them in every city, where the law was read every sabbath, and other acts of devotion performed. It was indeed the most effectual method of preserving the knowledge of God and his law, and a sense of their duty.

This then was another good effect of this dispensation, and may justly be offered as one good reason of their being so strongly fixed against idolatry, ever after the Babylonish captivity.

5. This dispensation was also calculated to produce good effects among

among the nations, whither they were carried into captivity; for wherever they were dispersed in the eastern countries, they would bring with them the knowledge of the true God, now seriously imprest upon their hearts.

But divine Providence, by such signal circumstances of his interposition, as were published and known over all the vast extent of the eastern empire, raised some of the captive Jews to the highest posts of dignity and power in the courts of Assyria and Persia, Dan. i. 19, 20. insomuch that the most haughty monarchs openly confessed the living and true God, as the only and supreme God, Dan. ii. 47, &c. and made decrees that were published throughout their spacious dominions, in favour of the profession and worship of that God, Dan. iii. 29.

The affair of queen Esther and Mordecai, and the decree of the renowned Ahasuerus, in favour of the Jews in his empire, consisting of one hundred and twenty seven princes, must not only have given the Jews every where great distinction and honour, but also have rendered the great God more known, and his religion more respectable, insomuch that we find many of the people of the land, many of the Persians, became Jews, or proselytes to the Jewish religion.

The great Cyrus was so well acquainted with the true God, that as one of his first acts, after he was advanced to the empire of Persia, he made a decree for the return of the Jews into their own country, and for the rebuilding of the temple, Ezra i. 1 to 5.

From these circumstances it is clear, that the Jews, notwithstanding their depravity in their own country, during the captivity of seventy years, must have been a burning and a shining light all over the eastern countries. And thus in this dispensation also, God the father and governor of mankind, was working for the reformation and improvement of the world in that which is the true excellency of their nature, and the only foundation of their happiness.

CHAP. IV.

Prophets after the Captivity. Description of the Jewish Ritual, or Ceremonial Law.

EZRA, Chapter 4.

THE Samaritans obstruct the Jews in the building of the city and temple; so that the work ceased till the second year of Darius Hystaspes, namely, for the space of fourteen years.

DANIEL, 10, 11, 12.

The visions and prophecies in these chapters were revealed to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus, and the third year after the captivity.

HAGGAI, Chapter 1. Verse 1 to 12.

Haggai excites Jerubbabel, the governor, and Jeshua, the High-priest, to build the Lord's house in the second year of Darius Hystaspes.

HAGGAI, Chapter 1. Verse 12 to the End. EZRA, Chap. 5. Verse 1, 2.

Jerubbabel and Jeshua immediately apply to the work.

HAGGAI 2. Verse 1 to 10.

Haggai encourageth them from the Lord to proceed.

ZECHARIAH, 1. Verse 1 to 7.

Zechariah makes his first address to the Jews, who were building the temple, assuring them that God would turn to them with a blessing, if they turned to him with repentance and reformation.

HAGGAI 2. Ver. 10 to the End.

Haggai rebukes the indifference of the Jews in building the temple; encourages vigorous endeavours with the blessing of plenty; and assures Zerubbabel of the extraordinary favour of God.

ZECHARIAH 1. Ver. 7 to the End, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

At this time these visions greatly encouraged the Jews in building the city and temple, and assurances of the divine protection against all their enemies, were revealed to Zechariah.

EZRA, 5. Ver. 3 to the End.

The Samaritans again disturb the Jews, and put a stop to the building of the temple.

EZRA 6. Verse 1 to 15.

Darius sends a decree to Jerusalem positively ordering the temple to be rebuilt, and the expences of it furnished out of the taxes laid on the provinces; which accordingly was done, till it was finished.

ZECHARIAH, 7, 8.

The Jews who were in Babylon, (for great numbers still remained there, and in other parts of the Persian empire) judging that the state of Judea and Jerusalem was now so thoroughly restored and established by Darius's decree, that it might be no longer proper to keep the fast in the fifth month (when the city and temple were built by Nebuchadnezzar) which they had hitherto observed for seventy years together, sent two messengers to Jerusalem to ask the opinion of the priests and prophets that were there, about this matter.

God therefore gave them by the Prophet Zechariah the answer relating to that, and other fasts, which we have in the seventh and eighth chapter of this prophecy.

ZECHARIAH, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

As these chapters have no date, we may suppose they were delivered in some of the times subsequent to the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes.

EZRA 6. Verse 15 to the End.

This year the temple was finished, with great joy and solemnity.

The

The Jews had been about it, from first to last, twenty years.

ESTHER 1.

Artaxerxes, or Ahasuerus, being entirely settled in his throne, made a great feast for all his nobles, and divorced Vashti his queen.

ESTHER 2. Ver. 1 to 16.

A collection of virgins made for the king, of whom Esther was one.

EZRA 7, 8, 9, 10.

In the beginning of this year, Ezra received from Artaxerxes a very ample commission for his return to Jerusalem, with any of his countrymen that were disposed to accompany him; giving them full authority in things both civil and religious, to regulate both according to the law.

The decree was probably granted at the solicitation of Esther. The decree, the families, and numbers of the Jews that went with Ezra to Jerusalem, fall within the compass of these four chapters.

Note, from Ezra's entering upon this work, the beginning of Daniel's seventy weeks is to be computed.

Note also, that Ezra continued in the government about thirteen years, till Nehemiah succeeded him in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, or Ahasuerus.

ESTHER 2. Ver. 16 to 21.

Esther having been only concubine about two years, is now made queen.

ESTHER 2. Ver. 21 to the end.

Bigthan and Taresh, two Eunuchs in the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of Artaxerxes, or Ahasuerus, which was discovered to the king by Mordecai, queen Esther's uncle.

ESTHER 3, 4, 5, &c. to the end of the Book.

Haman, an Amalekite, descended from king Agag, in Saul's time, made prime minister to Artaxerxes, laid a plot to extirpate the whole race of the Jews. But it turned upon himself, as related in the book of Esther.

NEHEMIAH, 1, 2, 3, &c. to the end of the Book.

Nehemiah, with a commission from Artaxerxes, or Ahasuerus, probably by favour of queen Esther, (Neh. ii. 6.) succeeded Ezra in the government of Judea, rebuilds the walls, re-peoples the city, reforms disorders, &c. Thus he was employed for twelve years, namely from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, Neh. v. 14.

Within this time Ezra is supposed to have published his edition of the Hebrew scriptures. See *Prideaux's* Connection page 475. Nehemiah returned from Jerusalem to the Persian court. Neh. xiii. 16.

Note. About this time flourished Malachi the Prophet.

NEHEMIAH, 13. ver. 6, 7, &c.

After certain days, that is, after about five years, Nehemiah, returned to Jerusalem, with a new commission, and made a further reformation, with which act of reformation the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament are closed.

Simon the Just, High-priest of the Jews, completes the canon of the Old Testament, by adding the *two Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi.* "That these "could not be put into the canon "by Ezra is plain; for four of them "upon just grounds, were supposed "to have been written by him, (that "is the two Books of Chronicles, and "the Books of Ezra and Esther) and "the Book of Nehemiah was written "after his time, and so in all proba- "bility was the Book of Malachi; "therefore a later time must be as- "signed for this insertion into the "sacred canon; and no person is "more likely than Simon the Just, "who is said to have been the last of "the men of the great synagogue.

"What the Jews call the great "synagogue, were a number of el- "ders, amounting to one hundred "and twenty, succeeding each other "in a continued series, from the re- "turn of the Jews from the Babylo- "nish captivity, to the time of Simon "the Just, who streniously laboured "in restoring the Jewish church and "state.

"In order to this, the holy Scrip- "tures being the rule by which they "were to go, their chief care and "study was to make a faithful col- "lection of those Scriptures, and "publish them accurately to the "people.

"Ezra, and the men of the great "synagogue, in his time, settled the "canon of all but the aforesaid Books, "and these were probably settled and "added to the canon in the time of "Simon the Just, who died about "thirty-one years after *Alexander the* "*Great;* for, in 1 Chron. iii. 19, "&c. the genealogy of the sons of "Zerubbabel is carried down for so "many descents after him, as may "well be thought to reach to the "time of Alexander.

"In Nehemiah, xii. 22. we have "the days of Jaddua, spoken of as "then past; but Jaddua out-lived "Alexander two years.

"These passages, therefore, were "probably inserted by *Simon the* "*Just*, who perfected and finally "settled the canon of the holy "scriptures.

"After this followed the times of "traditions. Hitherto the scriptures "were the only rule of faith and "manners, which God's people stu- "died; but thenceforth traditions "began to be regarded, till at length "they overbore the word of God it- "self, as we find in the time of our "blessed SAVIOUR.

"The collection of these tradi- "tions they called the Mishnah, that "is, the second law; and those who "delivered and taught them, were "stiled the *mishnical* Doctors." See *Prideaux's* Con. *Ptolemy Soter.*

DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

JEWISH RITUAL, OR CEREMONIAL LAW.

WE must now turn back to the Mosaic constitution, which consisted:

1st. Of political and judicial laws.

2d. Of moral precepts, such as the ten commandments.

3d. Of rites and ceremonies, such as circumcision, sacrifices, washings, purifications, the use of certain garments, &c. and divers rites by the priests in the tabernacle.

We shall observe in general, that the design of those ceremonies, justly explained, was to convey religious and moral instructions, as well as the express precepts.

Hieroglyphics, which represent sense of the mind, by outward figures of actions, were the first and most antient literature.

So the government of the world by divine Providence, and its extraordinary interposition in favour of good men, is represented by a ladder, standing upon the earth, and reaching to Heaven, with the Angels ascending and descending on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who ruleth over all, Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.

In the stile of this Hieroglyphic our Lord speaks, John, i. 51. *Hereafter ſhall ye ſee Heaven open, and the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the ſon of man.* Meaning, you shall see an extraordinary divine interposition, working in my favour, by many miraculous operations.

The exaltation of Joseph above the rest of his family, was represented by the hieroglyphic of his sheaf standing upright, and the eleven sheaves of his brethren standing round about, and bowing to it. As also of the sun, and moon, and eleven stars, making obeisance to him, Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9.

The tribe of Judah is represented by a young lion; Issachar, by a strong ass; Dan, by a serpent lurking in the road; Napthali, by a hind; Joseph, by a frightful bough; Benjamin, by a revening wolf; Gen. xlix. 9, 14, &c.

A rod or staff, as it is an instrument of striking or beating down, is the hieroglyphic or power exerted in conquering, punishing and ruling, Isa. x. 5. 24. With such a rod Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh, as hieroglyphically representing the power

power and authority of God, in whose name they demanded the release of the Israelites, Exod. vii. 15. Thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreeable to the literature of the age.

A horn, represented temporal power and dominion, 1 Sam. ii. 10. Psalm lxxix. 24.

A yoke, such as slaves carried upon their shoulders, servitude or bondage. Gen. xxvii. 37, 40.

This may serve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics, a sort of language to which the Jews were then accustomed; being the learning of that age, which they could understand much better than abstract reasonings, about moral truths and duties.

We may therefore, on this account, well admit, that the rites and ceremonies of their religious institutions were hieroglyphic, and intended by external representations to give them useful instructions in true religion and real goodness.

If we consult the Prophets and Apostles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we shall find so much evidence of the moral and spiritual intention of so many, as may induce us to believe, this was the sense and spirit of all the rest.

They were enjoined frequent and various ablutions, or washings with water; the common use of which is to discharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean.

This was a very easy representation of purity of mind, or of an heart purged from filth and sin. In this manner the Prophets understood it, Psalm li. 2. *Wash me from mine iniquity.* ver. 7. *Wash me, and I shall be clean.* Isaiah i. 6. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings.*

Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilirated, had the signification of honour, joy, holiness, and inspiration, Psalm xlv. Acts x. 38. The priests officiated in garments of fine linen, Exod. xxxix. 27. meaning, that the priests should *be cloathed*, or have their souls adorned *with righteousness.*

Burning of incense, whose smoke riseth up with a pleasant smell, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer, Ps. cxli. 2 Luke i. 10.

Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations, Lev. xxvi. 41. Rom. ii. 29.

The sprinkling of blood, and of the water of separation (Num. xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic and had a moral signification, see Heb. ix. 13, 14. 1 Pet. 1, 2. As had likewise the muzzled mouth of the ox, Deut. xxv. 4. compared with 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

Some persons have indulged their fancies more than they ought, and pretended to have found more mysteries in the Hebrew ritual, than were really designed; but these instances, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a spiritual meaning; and as we are taught in the gospel every thing necessary to faith and practice, in the plainest manner, we need not give ourselves much

much trouble about discovering the meaning of the other rites, which are not explained by the Prophets and Apostles.

But the affair of sacrifice, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, was a type of the great Redeemer, and is best explained by a careful attention to the sufferings and death of Christ.

CHAP. V.

Dissertation on the nature of Prophecy and the degree of evidence, that may be reasonably supposed to result from the same.

BEFORE we proceed, in pursuance of our plan, to demonstrate the fulfilment of many prophecies relative to the person, coming, and offices of the Messiah, we think it highly necessary, by way of introduction to the main point, to offer some general remarks, concerning the nature and intent of scripture prophecy.

Prophecy is a light shining in a dark place, and we do well to give heed to it until the day of dawn, according to the Apostle's meaning, 2 Peter, i. 19. which is thus paraphrased by a late learned and pious prelate.

"The time will come when the "things you hope for shall be placed "in a clear light, when you shall see "all your expectations fully justified "in the accomplishment, in the mean "while ye do well to attend to pro-"phecy, though but a small glim-"mering light, and shining at a dis-"tance in a dark place, yet the best "you have or can have at present."

Metaphorical expressions and similitudes ought not to be rigidly and strictly canvassed; it is sufficient to see the general import and meaning of them, which in the case before us is very clear and amounts to this: That the knowledge of God gives us of things future by the means of prophecy, is but an imperfect, obscure knowledge, not to be compared with that clear knowledge, which will attend the manifestation of the things themselves.

Our present business shall be to confirm this proposition by the authority of scripture, which may suggest some useful observations concerning the nature of prophecy and the evidence arising from it.

If we look into the first epistle of Peter, we shall find that the ancient prophecies of which he speaks in the passage referred to, and which he stiles the *more sure word of prophecy*, were not apprehended or clearly understood by those inspired persons who delivered them, for there he represents them, *searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*, 1 Pet. i. 11. To the same purpose our Saviour speaks, Matt. xiii. 17.

Many Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them, &c. The apostle Paul gives the like account of the gift of prophecy under the gospel dispensation, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12. *We know in part and we prophecy in part, &c.*

Now if the Prophets and righteous men of old to whom the word of God came, did not clearly understand the things which they foretold, but employed themselves in searching and examining the prophetical testimonies of the spirit which was in them; if the Prophets of the New Testament knew only in part, and prophesied only in part; it is most evident, that others, to all appearance less qualified than they to understand the determinate sense of the propheeies, could have but a confused and indistinct notion of the things foretold.

Prophecy is thus described by its divine author; *I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the Prophets, Hosea* xii. 10. which similitudes are elsewhere spoken of as *dark speeches* delivered to the Prophets in *visions* and in *dreams*, Numb. xii. 6, 8. For this reason the Jews when they spoke with contempt of their Prophets were used to say, *Doth he not speak parables*, Ezek. xx. 49. Our blessed Lord seems to speak of the ancient prophecies under the same character; *know you not, says he* to his disciples, *this parable? And how then will ye know all parables?* Mark iv. 13. That is, if ye understand not this plain parable of the sower, how will ye understand all the ancient prophecies relating to the gospel, which are much harder *parables?*

These passages are sufficient to prove, that Prophecy was never intended to be a very distinct evidence; and to shew St. Peter's meaning in comparing *the word of Prophecy to a light shining in a dark place*, and in making this evidence so much inferior to that we are to receive, when the fullness of time comes for the manifestation of God's promises.

A figurative and dark description of a future event, will be figurative and dark even when the event happens; and consequently will have all the obscurity of a figurative, and dark description as well after, as before the event. The Prophet Isaiah describes the peace of Christ's kingdom in the following manner: *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.* Isaiah xi. 6. It is reasonable to think that none (some modern Jews excepted,) ever understood this passage literally; nor can it now be literally applied to the gospel; it was and is capable of different interpretations; it may mean temporal peace; but whatever the true meaning is, this Prophecy does no more obtrude one determinate sense upon the mind since the coming of Christ than it did before.

It is absurd therefore to expect clear and evident conviction from every single prophecy applied to Christ, as the evidence must arise from a view and comparison of all together.

Propheeies are not all of one kind, or of equal clearness; the most literal Prophecies relating to Christ were not always at the time of the delivery the plainest; for many of these relating to the most surprizing and wonderful events under the gospel, wanted

wanted not the veil or cover of figurative language. *A virgin ſhall conceive a ſon*, was a proposition which seemed to want some other interpretation than a literal one, which was totally inconsistent with all instances of former experience; and therefore probably this Prophecy was not understood by the ancient Jews, as importing a miraculous conception.

The event has not made this Prophecy clearer than it was before; the language of it was as well understood in the Prophet's time as now; but common sense led every man to understand it in a sense agreeable to nature and experience.

In like manner the prophecies from which the resurrection of Christ is inferred, were obscure and dark from a seeming inconsistency between the several parts of them. It is foretold that Christ should be *deſpiſed and rejected of men*, a man of sorrow and affliction; that his affliction should pursue him even to the grave; and it is also foretold, that notwithstanding these sufferings, and a wretched death, he should *prolong his days*, and have an *everlaſting kingdom*, and *ſee* the work of the Lord *proſper* in *his hands*.

These prophecies are not all plainer now than they were in the beginning; but the plain sense appeared at that time loaded with contradictions: here was one born to *miſery* and *affliction*, and yet he was the heir of an *everlaſting kingdom*: he was *condemned, executed*, laid in the *grave, and after all this* he was to *prolong* his *days*, and see the *work of the Lord proſper in his hands*. The resurrection of Christ reconciled all these difficulties, and seeming inconsistencies; and we now readily admit these prophecies in their plain, liternal sense, which was a very plain sense before, though a very hard one to be imagined or believed.

We may observe then, that the most literal prophecies have received the greatest confirmation, and the most light from the event; for the difficulty in this case not lying in the darkness or obscurity of the expression, but the seeming impossibility of the thing foretold, was fully cleared up by the accomplishment of the event: but no event can make a figurative or metaphorical expression to be a plain, or literal one, or restrain any prophecy to one determinate sense only, which was originally capable of many.

These things have been premised, to shew what kind of evidence we ought to expect from prophecies after their accomplishment. The effect of this argument is greatly obstructed, when persons expect from it more than it will yield; an error, into which they are drawn by hearing it often insinuated, that prophecy however, dark and obscure at first, grows extremely plain on its accomplishment; which, in some cases, is in fact true; but is not, nor cannot be so in all.

This pleading as it were for the obscurity of antient prophecies, may appear strange, as it may well be conceived more agreeable to the purpose of a christian divine, to maintain their clearness.

Now,

Now, as *Moſes* in another case said, *I would to God all the Lord's people were prophets;* it is fervently said in the present; *would to God all* the prophecies of the Lord were manifest to all his people.

But it matters little what we wish for, or think best; we must be content with such light and direction as God has thought proper to bestow upon us; and to enquire, why the antient prophecies are not clearer? is like enquiring, why God has not given us more reason, or made us as wise as Angels?

He hath graciously given us in both cases so much light as he thought proper, and enough to serve the ends he intended.

It is doubtless a mistake to conceive prophecy to be intended solely or chiefly for their sakes in whose time the events predicted are to happen. How long an idea doth it give of the administration of divine Providence, in sending Prophets one after another, from *Adam* to *Chriſt;* to imagine that all this was for their sakes, who lived in and after the time of Christ, with little regard to whom the prophecies were delivered?

As the prophecies of the New Testament appear to be designed chiefly for our sakes, who live by faith and not by sight; so the antient prophecies appear to have had the like use, and to have been chiefly intended to support the faith and religion of the old world; for, had it been otherwise, a set of prophecies given some few years before the Birth of Christ, would have served our purpose as well as a series of prophecies given from the very beginning, and running through every age.—— If we consider the use of prophecy, it will enable us to conceive the degree of clearness which ought to attend it.

Some persons are apt to ground the truth of the events predicted, entirely upon the evidence of the prophecy. They speak, for instance, as if they imagined the certainty and reality of our Saviour's resurrection very much concerned in the clearness of the prophecies, relating to that great and wonderful event, and seem to think that they are confuting the belief of his resurrection, when they are trying to confound the prophecies relating to it.

But, can any thing be more absurd? for what ground or pretence is there to enquire, whether the prophecies foretelling that the Messiah should die and rise again, do truly belong to Christ, unless we are first satisfied, that Christ died and rose again? we must be in the possession of the fact, before we can form any argument from the prophecy; and therefore the truth of the resurrection considered as a fact, is quite independent of the evidence or authority of prophecy.

The part which unbelievers ought to take in this question, if they would make any use of prophecy, should be to shew from the Prophets, that Christ was necessarily to rise from the dead; and then to prove, that in fact *Jeſus* never did rise; here would be a plain consequence.

But if they do not approve this method, they ought not to meddle with

with the prophecies; for if Christ did not rise, there is no harm done, if the Prophets have not foretold it: and if they allow the resurrection of Christ, what do they gain by discrediting the prophecies? the event will be what it is, let the prophecies be what they will.

If this be the case, that we must admit all the facts of the Gospel to be true, before we can come at the evidence of prophecy, it may be asked, what necessity there is for enquiring after prophecy at all? to, which may be added, are not the many miracles of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to Heaven, the pouring forth the gifts of the Spirit upon the Apostles, their speaking in divers tongues, and doing many wonders in the Name of Christ, sufficient evidence to us of the truth of the Gospel, without troubling ourselves to know whether these things were foretold, or in what manner they were foretold?

In answer to this question, it is offered, that such facts once admitted as truth, are a complete evidence of the divine authority of a revelation; and that if we had known no more of Christ, than that he claimed to be attended to as a person sent and commissioned by God, he needed no other credentials than these already mentioned; and it would have been impertinent to demand what prophet foretold his coming.

Nothing can be a stronger or clearer proof of the divine inspiration of the prophets, than their foretelling not only the outward actions, but even the inward dispositions of men, many ages before those men were in being. The prophets were naturally prejudiced in favour of their own nation; but yet they foretel the infidelity and reprobation of the Jews, their disbelief of the Messiah, and thereupon their rejection by God. We will not multiply quotations to this purpose, it will be sufficient to produce one or two passages from the Evangelical Prophet Isaiah. The 53 chapter is a most famous prophecy of the Messiah, and it begins with upbraiding the Jews for their unbelief, 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' which St. John 12 chap. 38 ver. and St. Paul Rom. 10 chap. 16 ver. have expressly applyed to the unbelieving Jews of their time.

The prophet had before been commissioned to declare unto the people, the judgment of God for their infidelity and disobedience, 6 chap. 9 ver. &c. 'And he said, go ye and tell this people (this people, not my people,) Hear ye indeed, but understand not; See ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.' In the style of scripture the prophets, are said to do what they declare *will be done:* and in like manner Jeremiah is said, 1 chap. 10 ver. to be 'set over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out,

and pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant;' because he was authourised to make known the purposes and decrees of God, and because these events would follow in consequence of his prophecies. 'Make the heart of this people fat, is therefore as much as to say, denounce my judgment upon this people, that their heart shall be fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes shut; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.' This prophecy might relate in some measure to the state of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity; but it did not receive its full completion till the days of our Saviour; and in this sense it is understood and applied by the writers of the New Testament, and by our Saviour himself. The prophet is then informed, that this infidelity and obstinacy of his countrymen, should be of long duration. 'Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.' Here is a remarkable gradation in the denouncing of these judgments. Not only Jerusalem and 'the cities should be wasted without inhabitants', but even the single *houses* should be *without man;* and not the *houses* of the cities should be *without man*, but even the country should *be utterly desolate;* and not only the people should be removed out of the *land*, but *the Lord* should *remove them far away:* and they should not be removed for a short period, but there should be *a great* or rather *long forsaking in the midst of the land.*

And hath not the world seen all these particulars exactly fulfilled? Have not the Jews laboured under a spiritual blindness and infatuation, in *hearing but not understanding*, in *seeing but not perceiving* the Messiah, after the accomplishment of so many prophecies, after the perpormance of so many miracles? and in consequence of their refusing to *convert and be healed*, have not *their cities been wasted without inhabitant, and their houses without man?* Hath not their *land been utterly desolate?* Have they not been *removed far away* into the most distant parts of the earth? and hath not their removal or banishment, been now more than 1700 years duration? And do they not still continue deaf and blind, obstinate and unbelieving? The Jews at the time of the delivery of this prophecy, gloried in being the peculiar church, and people of God: and would any Jew of himself have thought, or have said, that his nation would in process of time, become an infidel and reprobate nation, infidel and reprobate for many ages, oppressed by men, and forsaken by God? It was above 750 years before Christ, that Isaiah predicted these things; and how could he have predicted them, unless he had been illuminated

illuminated by the divine vision; or how could they have succeeded accordingly, unless the spirit of prophecy, had been the spirit of God? The Jews would not receive Christ, on account of his long and patient sufferings, his being meanly attired, and his fortune low; this was a great prejudice against him in the opinion of the Jews, who expected greater things from their Redeemer, and could not easily hope to see him return in *glory* and *power*, who lived and died so meanly and so miserably; but it is a sufficient answer to all such prejudices, to prove, that mean as he appeared, he had a *real Majesty* and glory, being actually invested with *honour and glory* from God the Father.

We shall close this subject with the following observation.

The *more sure word of prophecy* here mentioned, is not to be understood meerly of the prophecies of the *Old* Testament; for it evidently refers to the prophecies of the *New* likewise, as appears in the first Epistle, where St. *Peter* appeals not only to the ancient prophets, but also to the preachers of the Gospel; and in the second Epistle, where he speaks of them together again, as joint supporters of the hopes of Christ's coming.

How unhappily then was this text made choice of, to set up ancient prophecy in opposition to the Gospel evidence, since the prophecy here intended, is itself a *Gospel* evidence, and so far from being superior to all the miracles of Christ, that it owes all its authority to them.

We have been a little particular on this head, because the enemies of revelation, to afford scope for their argument, have insinuated, that the evidence which Christians have from prophecy for the certainty of their hopes and expectations, compared with the evidence they have from the preaching of the Apostle, is the greater and surer evidence; whereas the authenticity of the former absolutely depends on the evidence of the latter, in all the essential points relative to the ground work of man's salvation by the incarnation and sufferings of an ever blessed Redeemer. What evidence the former dispensation, previous to the coming of Christ receives from the latter, consequent upon it, we hope to shew in the following chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Demonſtration of the Fulfilment of the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, particularly thoſe relating to the Perſon, Coming, and Offices of the Meſſiah, interſperſed with Anſwers to divers Objections, raiſed by Unbelievers.

TO elucidate the following subject, it is necessary to premise some general remarks; as we must look back to the rise and progress of divine prophecy, to discover what ends divine wisdom intended to subserve by it. It is no *commendation* of prophecy, to say that it is very dark and obscure, neither can it be a *reproach*, provided it answers all the ends designed by Providence, which we are now briefly to consider.

Now to proceed with as much plainness and clearness as possible, we observe, that by *prophecy* in its most general sense and extensive latitude; we are to understand, "All "the declarations, which God has "made concerning the future state "of mankind in this world, or in "the next; consequently, all the "hopes and expectations which are "grounded on God's promises, and "do not result from reason and na-"tural knowledge, must be refer-"red to prophecy, as their ori-"ginal."

It cannot be supposed, that God has delivered prophecies meerly to gratify or employ the curiosity of the inquisitive, or that he gave his spirit to them, meerly to enable them to give forth predictions for the amusement and entertainment of the world. There must be some end intended worthy of the author; and what end can be considered more worthy of God, than the promotion of the knowledge of his blessed will, and the general peace and happiness of mankind? These things belong to him as Creator and Governor of the world; these things are his peculiar province.

To this assertion these objections may be raised: 'Tis true indeed these things do belong to God, but what has prophecy to do with these things? God can govern the world, without acquainting men with his secrets: He has given a plain law to walk by, the result of that reason and knowledge with which he has endowed us.

Prophecy can never contradict or over-rule the light of reason and nature; nor can we suppose that we came so imperfect and unfinished out of the hands of the Creator, as not to have light enough to see our own duty, and to pursue our natural happiness, without an admonisher constantly before us.

Let us allow the original state of nature to be as perfect and compleat as the objectors can desire, as we must be allowed to suppose, that since man was created a moral agent, with freedom of will, it was possible for him to fall, and consequently possibly he may have fallen. Admitting this to be the case, what essential purpose can natural religion subserve? Repentance, it may be said will re-

store

store offenders to the divine favour; but how often will this remedy serve? sin and repentance may go on in a perpetual round: to allow this differs little from allowing a liberty and impunity to sin without repentance.

If God is Governor and Judge of the world, there must be a time for judgment, and man may, after all reasonable and equitable allowances made, be ripe for judgment. Now in this case, if a man after all equitable allowance made, be condemned under and by the law of nature; to what end has he recourse to natural religion? He has had his trial, and condemnation by that law already; and has nothing to learn from it, but the misery of his condition.

To recommend natural religion exclusively of all other assistance, it is by no means sufficient to shew from principles of reason, the excellency and reasonableness of moral virtues, or to prove from the nature of God, that he must delight in and reward virtue: it must be proved from the nature of man too, that he is excellently qualified to obey this law, and cannot well fail of attaining all the happiness under it, that ever nature designed for him. What avails it, that the *law* is *good*, if the *subjects* are so bad, that they either will not, or cannot obey it? By proving to sinners the excellency of natural religion, we only shew how justly they may expect to be punished for their iniquity. A sad truth which wants no confirmation!

All the hope left in such a case is, that God may freely pardon and restore, but whether he will or no, the offenders can never learn from natural religion.

This hope therefore must flow from another spring; their confidence in God must and can arise only from the *promise* of God; that is, from the *word* of *prophecy*; for which reason prophecy must for ever be an essential part of such a sinner's religion.

This reasoning exactly agrees with the most authentic account we have of the beginning of prophecy in the world.

When God had finished all his works, and *man, the chief of them*, he viewed them all, and *behold* they were *very good*. How long this goodness lasted we know not; that it did not last very long is certain.

During the time of man's innocence, there were frequent communications between God and him; but not the least hint of any *word* of *prophecy* delivered to him. The hopes of nature where then alive and vigorous, and man had before him the prospect of that happiness to which he was created, to encourage and support his obedience. In this state, natural religion wanted no other assistance, and therefore it had no other.

But when the case was altered by the transgression of our first parents; when natural religion had no longer any sure hopes or comforts in reserve; when God came down to judge the offenders, and yet with intentions finally to rescue and preserve them

from the ruin they had brought on themselves; then came in the word of prophecy; not in opposition to natural religion, but in support of it; and to convey new hopes to man, since his own were irrecoverably lost and extinguished in the fall.

Thus have we endeavoured to trace the ends and designs of Almighty wisdom, in divine prophecy, and humbly presume we have convinced every serious christian, that it was given for the promotion of the knowledge of God himself, and the general peace and hapiness of mankind; and, upon the whole, as a concurrent testimony of the truth of that revelation on which depends our future and eternal salvation.

We shall now begin the prosecution of the main point, with considering that prophecy, which appears to be the ground-work and foundation of all that have been since.

It may perhaps be expected that the way should be cleared to this enquiry, by removing the difficulties which arise from the historical narration of the fall; and could any thing material be added in support of what is *commonly said* upon this subject, the time and pains would be well bestowed.

But the oftener this case is considered in all its circumstances, the more will the commonly received interpretation prevail, which is evidently the true and antient interpretation of the Jewish Church, as appears from the allusion to the history of the fall, to be met with in the books of the Old Testament.

Waving therefore an attempt that would be productive of no real advantage, we must demand the same equity of all in interpreting the sense of *Moses*, as they would certainly use toward any other antient writer, which, if allowed, this plain fact undeniably arises from the history, "That man was tempted to "disobedience, and did disobey, and "forfeited all title to happiness, and "to life itself; that God judged him, "and the *deceiver* likewise under "the form of a serpent."

Upon this fact therefore we proceed to consider the prophecy before us.

The words are these, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*, Gen. iii. 15.

Christian writers apply this to our blessed Lord and Saviour, emphatically stiled here The Seed of the Woman, and who came in the fullness of time to bruise the serpent's head, by destroying the works of the Devil, and restoring those to the liberty of the sons of God, who were held under the bondage and captivity of sin.

Our First Parents were now in a state of sin, standing before God to receive sentence for their disobedience, and had reason to expect a full execution of the penalty threatened, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

But

But God came in mercy as well as judgment, proposing not only to punish but restore man. The judgment is awful and severe; the woman is doomed to sorrow in conception; the man to sorrow and travel all the days of his life, and the end of the judgment is, *Duſt thou art, and to Duſt thou ſhalt return.*

Had they been thus left, it is highly reasonable to think, there could have been no religion left in the world; for a sense of religion without hope, is a state of phrenzy and distraction, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing else that is praise-worthy. If therefore God intended to preserve them as objects of mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communicate so much hope to them, as might be a rational foundation for their future endeavours to reconcile themselves to him by better obedience.

This seems to be the primary intention of this first divine prophecy, and it was absolutely necessary to the state of the world, and the condition of religion, which could not possibly have been supported without the communication of such hopes. The prophecy therefore is excellently adapted to this purpose, and manifestly conveyed such hopes to our first parents; though it was in the phrase of St. *Peter*, but a light shining in a dark place.

All that they could with certainty infer from it was, that their case was not desperate; that some remedy, some deliverance from the evil they were under would in time appear; but *when*, or, *where*, or by what means, they could not understand.

However, upon the whole we may venture to pronounce, that this promise or prophecy, though surrounded with all this obscurity, is foundation for religion, trust and confidence towards God after the fall, in hopes of deliverance from the evils introduced by disobedience.

If any are desirous of knowing, whether this prophecy is the obvious and most natural meaning of it, in that sense wherein our first parents and their children after them, might easily understand it, has been verified by the coming of Christ; it is presumed it may be clearly proved, that all the expectation raised by this prophecy has been completely answered by the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus: and what more can be desired than to see a prophecy fulfilled exactly?

This prophecy is urged further by Christian writers, who shew from the terms of it, that Christ is therein particularly foretold: he properly is the *Seed of the Woman*, in a sense which no other ever was, his sufferings were well prefigured by the bruising of the heel, his complete victory over sin and death, by *bruiſing the Serpent's Head.*

Though we readily allow that the expressions do not necessarily imply this sense, yet since this prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Christ, and by the event appropriated to him alone; we may demand, if it is absurd in us to suppose, that God, to whom the whole event was known from the beginning, should make choice of

such expressions, as naturally conveyed so much knowledge as he intended to convey to our first parents?

However the wisdom of man may despise this method, there is nothing in it unbecoming the wisdom of God; and when we find this to be the case, not only in this instance, but in many other prophecies of the Old Testament, it is not without reason that we conclude, that under the obscurity of antient prophecy, there was an evidence of God's truth kept in reserve, to be made manifest in due time.

Upon the whole, this prophecy was the grand charter of God's mercy, after the fall. Nature had no certain help for sinners liable to condemnation; her right was lost with her innocence. It was necessary therefore, either to destroy the offenders, or to save them, by raising them to a capacity of salvation, by giving them such hopes as might enable them to exercise reasonable religion.

So far the light of prophecy extended; but by what means God intended to work his salvation, he did not expressly declare; and who has a right to complain that he did not, or to precribe to him rules in dispensing his mercy to the children of men?

This prophecy, we, upon whom the latter days are come, have seen verified more fully than those to whom it was delivered could perhaps conceive. View it therefore with respect to them, and you will find it answered their wants. View it with respect to ourselves, and you find that it answers our expectations; wherefore then complain we of its obscurity?

As we shall rather confine ourselves to clear and distinct prophecies, and such as nearly relate to God's great dispensation of mercy and goodness toward mankind, manifested by the revelation of his son, we pass on to the important period, which begins at the call of *Abraham*, and runs through the law and the prophets, ending where the gospel of Christ Jesus commences.

How soon the world after the deluge corrupted their ways and lost the knowledge of the true God, *and changed the glory of the incorruptible —into an image made like to corruptible man*, we cannot certainly know; but this we certainly know, that in *Abraham's* time, idolatry had spread far and wide, and taken deep root even in the family of *Shem*, and in that branch of it particularly, from which *Abraham's* descended.

This being the case, it is highly probable, that true religion had entirely failed in the world, had not God visibly interposed to preserve such a sense of it, as was necessary for the accomplishment of his great design to restore mankind.

When *Abraham* was called, and received the promises, he had assurance given him not only of peculiar blessings to himself and posterity, but likewise of a general blessing to be conveyed through him to mankind, *I will make of thee*, says God, *a great nation, and will bleſs thee, and make thy name great, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing: And I will bleſs them that bleſs*

bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee. Immediately it follows, *And in thee ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed, Gen.* xii. 2, 3. It is of great importance in the present case to distinguish rightly these promises.

The promise of temporal prosperity to *Abraham* and his posterity, is sufficiently explained in the course of his story. These were great promises, and great inducements to obedience; but, except the particular gift of the land of Canaan, there was nothing in them peculiar to *Abraham* and his posterity only.

Thus far then the promise to Abraham, appears to be derived from the temporal covenant established with Noah and his sons after the flood, in which other nations and people had a share as well as himself; but if we look foward, we shall see the distinction between the several promises grown plain, when God renews the covenant, and limits the *peculiar bleſſing* of Abraham to the son, which should be born of Sarah his wife.

In the 17th of Genesis, the Lord appears to Abraham, and says, *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Then follows, *I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly—and thou ſhalt be a father of many nations.*

At the 7th Verse, God promises to establish an *everlaſting* covenant, with him, and his seed, to give him and them all the *land of Canaan for* an *everlaſting poſſeſſion*, and to be their God.

Here are either two covenants, mentioned together in the compass of a few lines, or else the same covenant repeated with this difference, that in the last place it is stiled an *everlaſting* covenant, and the land of Canaan is assigned for an *everlaſting* possession, with this remarkable addition, that God promises to be the God of Abraham, and of his seed after him.

This is the first time that this peculiar character assumed by God, of being the God of Abraham, and of his seed, occurs in scripture, and it is evidently connected with the promise of the *everlaſting* covenant; which connection seems to be the true foundation of our Saviour's argument, from this expression, to prove the resurrection of the dead, as the connection of the land of Canaan, to the *everlaſting* covenant, seems to be the reason of treating the land of Canaan, as a type or sign of heaven.

The distinction of the two covenants, in the case of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, and Isaac, the son of Sarah, Abraham's wife made by God himself, is the foundation of St. Paul's argument to the Galatians, *It is written*, says he, *that Abraham had two ſons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond woman, was born after the fleſh; but he of the free woman was born by promiſe. Which things are an allegory, for theſe are two covenants*, Gal. iv. 22, 23, 24.

Whoever is capable of considering what is related concerning this matter in the book of Genesis, will evidently

dently see, that there are indeed two covenants, and two such covenants as fully justify the apostle's reasoning upon this point.

What distinct notion Abraham had of the blessing promised to all nations through him and his seed? what he thought of the manner and method by which it should be effected, we cannot pretend to affirm. But that he understood it to be a promise of restoring mankind, and delivering them from the remaining curse of the fall, there can be little doubt. He knew that death had entered by sin; and he knew that God had promised victory and redemption to the seed of the woman.

Upon the hopes of this restoration, the religion of his ancestors was founded; and when God, from whom this blessing upon *all men* was *expected*, did expressly promise a blessing *on all men*; and in this promise founded his everlasting covenant: what could Abraham else expect, but the completion in his seed of that antient promise and prophecy concerning the victory to be obtained by the seed of the woman?

The blessings belonging to the special covenant, given to Abraham and his seed, were reserved to be revealed in God's appointed time. The Prophets under the law could not be commissioned to declare these blessings openly and nakedly, without anticipating the time of their revelation. Hence it is that the predictions concerning Christ and his kingdom, are cloathed in such figures, as were proper to rouse the hope and attention of the people, without carrying them beyond the bounds of knowledge, prescribed by God to the age of the Jewish covenant.

The Gospel is not founded on temporal promises; so far from it that we are called upon to take up our cross and follow Christ. The bringing in of better hopes has vacated the promises of the mosaic covenant, and it is expected of us, after so much light given, that our faith should be proof against the adversities of the world, without the help of a Prophet to foretel or reveal to us in every instance the counsel of God. Those prophecies, which relate to the great trust vested with the Jews, even the *hopes of redemption*; which were to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth, are events, in which we are highly concerned, and which will deserve our particular consideration.

The next limitation of the spiritual covenant is to the tribe of Judah in that famous prophecy delivered by Jacob just before his death; *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be*, Gen. xlix. 10.

There are so many interpretations of this prophecy, some peculiar to the Jews, and some to the christians; that we shall not enter into the decision of them at present; but take the whole prophecy relating to the tribe of Judah together; and there will be enough to answer our immediate purpose, without entering into these obscurities.

Judah, ſays Jacob, thou art he whom

whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe; thy hand ſhall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children ſhall bow down before thee, Gen. xlix. 8.

In a form of words not unlike this, the peculiar blessing was appropriated to Shem, *Japhet ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan, ſhall be his ſervant,* Gen. ix. 26.

When Jacob himself had the bleſſing of Abraham settled upon him by his father Isaac, in preference to his brother Esau, the very words in which the grant was made to him, are these: *Let people ſerve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be thou Lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's ſons bow down to thee,* Gen. xxvii. 29.

Now when Jacob partly uses these very words, partly others of like import, can he be understood to beſtow any other blessing on his son Judah than that very blessing which he in the same form of words, received from his father?

The next and last limitation of this special promise is to the family of David; a point so uncontested, that there is no room to call it in question, without rejecting the authority of all the promises, and so plain withal that it needs no proving.

Here the promise rested until it fell upon him, from whom it was reſerved, and to whom it was ever due; who was the *firſt-born* of every creature; and concerning whom the Almighty had declared long before, *I will make him my firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*

Here it is fixed, and here it must rest, till *all things are accompliſhed*; for he must reign till he hath put all *enemies under his feet,* till death itſelf is swallowed up in victory.

It is proper to be observed, that the prophecies, relating to the covenant of better hopes, were given to the people of God: when religion itself seemed to be in distress, and to want all helps to support it in the world. When idolatry and evils of every kind prevailed, then for the sake of of the few righteous, were the better hopes revived, that the *Juſt might live by faith,* and that *a remnant might be ſaved.*

This was a time in which true faith wanted the comfort of future hopes; the present scene was dark and gloomy; the loving-kindness of the Lord was hid from his people, and they saw nothing but tokens of anger and displeasure on every side. In this time therefore, God thought fit to give more and plainer indications of his purpose, to establish the kingdom of righteousness, than had ever been given before, from the days of Adam.

Now was it that the *ſeed in whom all nations were to be bleſſed* was manifestly described; that the time and place of his birth were appointed; that his great works, his glories and his sufferings were foretold.

Now it was that God taught his people plainly to expect a new covenant, a better than that made with their fathers. In a word, now it was, that all eyes were opened to look for his coming, who was to be the *glory of Iſrael, the deſire of all nations, a light to lighten the Gentiles.*

This great scene being opened, and placed in so clear a view, the work of prophecy was finished; and in a few years, the gift itself ceased. A plain and demonstrative evidence, that the *ſpirit of prophecy* is the teſtimony of Jeſus; and that all the bleſſings and promiſes, given to God's ancient people, were to have their final accompliſhment in the manifeſtation of the *bleſſed ſeed*.

That the prophecy delivered at the time of the fall, was underſtood in the ancient Jewiſh church, to relate to the times of the Meſſiah, may with great probability be inferred from many paſſages, but eſpecially from one in Iſaiah, where, after a full deſcription of the kingdom of Chriſt, and the happineſs of thoſe who were the *ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord*, the ſtate and condition of the wicked, in the time of that kingdom, is thus deſcribed in a few words, *And duſt ſhall be the ſerpent's meat*, Iſa. lxv. 25.

By what figure of ſpeech, or for what reaſon is the ſerpent here made to ſignify, thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed from the *ſeed of the bleſſed?* Why is the puniſhment of theſe reprobates ſet forth by the ſerpent's eating duſt? There is nothing in the Prophet to explain this figure; but he ſeems to uſe it as a mode of expreſſion, well known and perfectly underſtood by his countrymen; and from whence could they borrow it, but from the hiſtory of man's fall? There you may find the *ſeed of the bleſſed*, to whom victory over the ſerpent is promiſed; and there you may ſee the ſerpent doomed to eat duſt; and the alluſion to this ancient prophecy in Iſaiah's deſcription of the kingdom of the Meſſiah, ſhews, in what ſenſe it was underſtood of old, and for many ages before the birth of Chriſt.

These prophecies relating to the Meſſiah, have ſtill a large and more extenſive uſe, not confined to any particular age, but reaching to every age of the chriſtian church. They were given to the *Jews of old* for the ſupport of their faith, and are a ſtanding reproof to their children of this age for their unbelief. They taught thoſe of the old time to expect the kingdom of Chriſt, and are a condemnation to thoſe of this time for rejecting it. They were a ſupport and an evidence to the goſpel, and furniſhed every true believer with an anſwer to *give to him, who aſketh the reaſon of the hope that is in him.*

The prophecy of Moſes recorded in the 17th of *Deuteronomy*, deſerves our particular attention: it runs thus: *The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet, from the midſt of thee, of thy brethren like unto me, unto him ye ſhall hearken*, ver. 15. The ſame is repeated ver. 18. with this addition: *And it ſhall come to paſs* (they are the words of God) *that whoſoever will not hearken unto my words which he* (that Prophet) *ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require it of him.*

Here now is a plain declaration on God's part, at the very time the law was eſtabliſhed, of another Prophet, like unto Moſes to be raiſed in time, as a new law-giver to whom all were to yield obedience.

I know

I know full well, that great authorities are produced for interpreting these words of a succession of Prophets in the Jewish church; but notwithstanding these authorities, the appeal lies to the law and to the testimony, and thither must we go.

In the first place then, the text speaks of one Prophet only in the singular number and not of many. In this case therefore the letter of the text agrees with our sense; an argument which ought to have great weight with those, who make such heavy complaints, when in demonstrating the authenticity of scripture, we go beyond the literal sense of the Old Testament.

2d. To expound this passage, of a succession of Prophets, and to say that all were to be like *Moſes*, contradicts God's own declaration concerning the manner, in which he intended to deal with other Prophets: As to all other Prophets, God declares he would speak to them *in viſions*, and in *dreams*, but with *Moſes*, he would converse *mouth to mouth*, or as it elsewhere expressed, *face to face*. Herein then consisted one chief dignity and eminence of *Moſes*, and in this respect the Prophets of *Iſrael* were not to be like him.

3d. The likeness to *Moſes*, spoken of in the passage under consideration, has a special regard to this singular privilege of seeing God face to face, as is evident partly from the text itself, and partly from the close of the book of *Deuteronomy* compared with the text: In the text itself a promise is given of a Prophet like *Moſes*, which likeness in the 18th verse is expounded by God's saying, *I will put my Words in his Mouth*, which imports something more than speaking to him in *viſions* and in *dreams*.

4th. If we enquire from historical evidence after the completion of this prophecy, we shall find, that it did most punctually agree with the character of our Saviour, and with no other Prophet, either before or after him. All the Prophets of the Old Testament saw visions and dreamed dreams; all the Prophets in the New were in the same state. St. *Peter* had a vision; St. *John* saw visions; St. *Paul* had visions and dreams; but Christ himself neither saw a vision, nor dreamed a dream, but had intimate and immediate communication with God the Father; he was in *the Father's boſom*, he and no man else *had ſeen the Father*, and had *the fullneſs of the Godhead in him*. Now let it be seriously observed; that *Moſes* and *Chriſt* are the *only two* in all the sacred history, who had this communication with God: the likeness to *Moſes* is said directly to lie in this, of seeing God *face to face*. Can the promise then of raising a Prophet like unto *Moſes* be possibly applied to any other person than Jesus Christ? the other part of the parallel needs not to be insisted on; that Christ was a lawgiver will easily be admitted on all hands; but the execution of this threat, annexed to this prophecy is too remarkable to be passed over in silence; has been literally fulfilled upon the whole nation; every man who considers the state of the Jews,

from

from the rejection of Christ to this day, must own, that this part of the prophecy at least, has been punctually verified.

Those who are educated in the belief of christianity, and taught to receive the books of both Testaments with equal reverence, are not apt to distinguish between the evidence for their faith arising from the one and the other: but if we look back to the earliest times of preaching the Gospel, and consider how the case stood as to the Jewish converts on one side, who were convinced of the divine authority of the Old Testament; and as to the Gentile converts on the other who had no such persuasions, the distinction will appear very manifestly.

The ancient prophecies, though they are evidence both to the Jew and the Gentile, yet they are not so to both in the same way of reasoning and deduction, nor to the same end and purpose; for, observe, the Jews were possessed of the oracles of God, and firmly persuaded of the truth of them; the very first thing therefore which he had to do upon the appearance of the Messiah, was to examine his title, by the character given of him in the Prophets; for he could not consistently with his belief in God, and faith in the antient prophecies, attend to other arguments, till fully satisfied and convinced in this. All the prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the offices and character of the Messiah, were immoveable bars to all pretensions, till fulfilled and accomplished in the long expected Redeemer.

For this reason the preachers of the Gospel, in applying to the Jews, begin with the argument from prophecy. Thus St. *Paul*, in his discourse with the Jews at Antioch, begins with the call of *Abraham*; and after a short historical deduction of matters from thence, to the time of *David*, he adds, *Of this man's ſeed hath God, according to his promiſe, raiſed unto Iſrael, a Saviour, Jeſus*, Acts xiii. 13.

Here the whole argument evidently rests upon the authority of Prophecy, and all the part of the Apostolical sermon are answerable to that beginning, proceeding from one end to the other, upon the authority of the old Prophets.

But the very same Apostle St. *Paul*, preaching to the people of Athens, Acts xvii. argues from other topics; for he says nothing of the Prophets, to whose mission and authority the Athenians were perfect strangers; but begins with declaring to them, *God that made the world, and all things therein;* and goes on condemning all idolatrous practices; and assuring them, that *God is not worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing.*

He accounts to them, for the past times of ignorance, at which God winked, and tells them, that *now* he calls men to repentance, having appointed *Chriſt Jeſus to be the judge of all men*, for the truth of which he appeals to the evidence of Christ's resurrection.—— *Where*, says the Apostle,

Apostle, *he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead,* Acts xvii. 31.

Wherefore is St. *Paul's* argument upon one and the same subject in Acts xiii. and xvii. so apparently different from each other? can this be accounted for any other way, than by considering the different circumstances of the persons to whom he delivered himself? In Acts xiii. he argues professedly with the Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, and who, from these oracles, were well instructed in the great marks and characters of the expected Messiah. It had been highly absurd therefore to reason with them upon other arguments, till he had first convinced them from their Prophets.

To them therefore he urges and applies the authority of prophecy only; but to the Athenians, who knew not the Prophets, or if they knew them, had no reverence or esteem for them, it would have been absurd to offer proofs from prophecies.

It is very observable, that St. *Paul* in his sermon at Athens goes no further, than calling them to repentance, and to faith in Christ, as the person appointed by God to judge the world.

Now in this doctrine he carried natural religion with him in every point, except the appointment of Christ to be judge, for which he appeals to the evidence given by God in raising Jesus from the dead.

But to the Jews he speaks of a Saviour, of remission of sins, of the justification of believers from all things, from which the law of *Moses* could not justify.

The difference therefore can only arise from this consideration, that the Jews were from their Scriptures well acquainted with the lost condition of man, and knew that a redemption from sin, and the power of it, was to be expected.

But the Gentiles had lost this knowledge, and were first to be taught the state of human nature, and the various administrations of Providence, with regard to mankind, before they could have any just notion of the redemption of the world.

With respect to the Gentiles then, the case stood thus. They were called from idols to the acknowledgement of the true God; from iniquity, to the practice of holiness: by setting before them Christ Jesus, the preacher of righteousness, and the appointed judge of the world, under the confirmation of many signs and wonders wrought by God for that purpose.

Being so far established, they were led back to view this wonderful scene of Providence, and the state of the world; and came to see that Christ was not only the judge, but the Redeemer of mankind. To the Jews prophecy was the first proof; to the Gentiles it was the last. The Jew believed in Christ, because foretold by the Prophets. The Gentile believed the Prophets, because they had so exactly foretold *Christ Jesus.* Both became stedfast believers having each in his way, a full view of all the dispensations of Providence toward mankind.

If this account be genuine and authentic, it will enable us to clear the argument from prophecy of the many misrepresentations, under which the enemies of revelation have industriously clouded it. It will shew us, that there is no necessity for a Gentile to become a Jew, in order to his becoming a Christian upon the authority of the antient Prophet. It will shew us, that the proof from prophecy is not an argument of the same kind in both cases, though in both cases, proceeding upon real and solid principles of reason.

But we proceed to observe another use of prophecy, with regard to the Jews, for which the Gentiles would seem not to have had the same occasion.

The Jews we know lived under a divine law, established by signs, and wonders, and mighty works, founded on very great promises on one side, and threatenings and mighty terror on the other, as far as the blessings and terror of this world can extend. They were warned over and over, not to forsake their law, or to suffer any strange customs and ceremonies to grow up among them.

These cautions, intended to preserve them from the corruptions of the Heathen nations around them, might easily, as in the event they had done, grow into prejudices against any future revelation, though made upon the authority of God himself.

To guard against such prejudices, and render them without excuse, it was but reasonable to give them early and frequent notice of the change intended, that they might not, under the colour of adhering stedfastly and faithfully to God's first covenant, and reject his second, when the time of publication came.

There are of this sort many prophecies in the Old Testament; of this kind are the many declarations on God's part, that he had no pleasure in sacrifices and oblations, in new moons, and in sabbaths; strange declarations, considering that all these were his own appointment! But not in the least strange, considering the many and frequent prophecies of a new and a better covenant to be established with his people.

The Prophet *Isaiah*, as before observed is frequently stiled the Evangelical Prophet, because of the many and express prophecies, to be found in him, relating to Christ and his church.

Now this Prophet, in the very entrance on his work, shews the little value of meer legal institutions. *To what purpose*, says he, speaking in God's name, *is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?——I am full of the burnt-offerings of Rome, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.——Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to hear them*, Isaiah xi. 14.

The bringing in of prophecy was not the only change in the state of religion, occasioned by the fall. Sacrifice came in at the same time, as appears by the course of the history; and it is hardly possible it should come in, especially at the time it did, any otherwise than upon the authority

thority of divine institution. It is the first act of religion mentioned in sacred history to be accepted by God; which implies strongly, that it was of his own appointment; for we can hardly suppose that such a mark of distinction would have been set upon a meer human invention.

In latter times, when the account of things grew clearer, sacrifice appears to be appointed by God as an *expiation* for *sin*; and we have no reason to imagine that it was turned aside from its original use.

There is indeed no express declaration of the use of sacrifice in religion, as its first appearance, and yet something appears in the account that may afford light in this matter. We read that *Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground*; *and Abel of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof. The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering, he had not respect.*

Allowing the maxim of the Jewish church to have been good from the first institution of sacrifice, *That without shedding of blood there is no remission*, the case may possibly be this. *Abel* came a petitioner for grace and pardon, and brought the attonement appointed for sin. *Cain* appears before God, as a *just person, wanting no repentance;* he brings an offering in acknowledgment of God's goodness and bounty; but no attonement in acknowledgment of his own wretchedness.

The expostulation of God with *Cain*, favours this account, If thou *dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? If thou dost not well, sin lieth at thy door.* That is, if thou art righteous, thy righteousness shall save thee; if thou art not, by what expiation is thy sin purged? it lieth still at thy door.

To this may be added, what the Apostle to the Hebrews affirms, Heb. xi. 4. that *Abel's* sacrifice was made excellent by faith. What could this faith be, but a reliance on the promises and appointments of God? which faith *Cain* wanted, relying on his own well-doing.

If this interpretation is admitted, it plainly shews, that the true religion instituted by God has been *one* and the *same* from the fall of *Adam*, subsisting even upon the same principle of faith. At first upon only *general*, and obscure hopes, which were gradually opened and unfolded in every age, till the better days came, when God thought good to call us into *the miraculous* light of his gospel.

It is necessary to consider this piece of history, because it shews that sacrifice was one kind of prophecy, or representation of the one great sacrifice once offered for the sins of the world.

In the infancy of the church they wanted instruction, and without doubt, were directed in every thing relating to religion, so far as was agreeable to that dispensation. Doubtless *Adam* was instructed by God to sacrifice, nor is it improbable, that those beasts, with the skins of which *Adam* and *Eve* were cloathed, Gen. iii. 21. were slain as sacrifices.

God

God certainly instructed our first parents in the faith and worship; which the alteration in their circumstances required.

Having made a most gracious covenant with them, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that he also signified to them, that they should for a perpetual ratification and assurance of it to their faith, offer to him sacrifices; for by the blood of sacrifices, covenants were ratified in latter times.

The eating of the tree of life, was a covenanting action (assuring immortality to their continued obedience) suitable to a state of innocence. But the slaying of living creatures (expressing the deadly nature of sin, at the same time that it assured them of eternal life) was more suitable to a state of guilt.

Our blessed Saviour is represented as standing in a three-fold relation to his church and people; as Prophet, Priest, and King: we shall therefore conclude this part of our subject, with instancing the congruity of the sacred writings in this respect, both before and after the fulfillment of these most important events.

First as a Prophet. We have considered at large the nature of prophecy, and shewn that the Prophets of God were the instruments for conveying the divine mind and will, relative to mankind, respecting futurity. We have endeavoured to prove the manner in which their predictions have been fulfilled under the gospel dispensation; from whence it must appear, that the Messiah's kingdom was the ultimate end to which they referred.

Now when we may consider the blessed Jesus, as the Prophet emphatically so stiled, because by his ministry and doctrine he hath thrown a light upon those parts of the ancient predictions, which appeared dark and obscure. Thus he is stiled, *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, Luke ii. 32. *The true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, John i. 9.

Among the many titles by which our Lord is spoken of, he is called, a *Prophet, whom* the people *muſt hear in all things*, Deut. xviii. 15. And again, in the nineteenth verse, God says, *And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever will not hearken unto my* words, which he shall *ſpeak in my name, I will require it of him.*

The prophetic office of the blessed Jesus, is particularly mentioned, *Iſ.* xlii. *Behold my ſervant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth. I have put my ſpirit upon him, &c.*

The gift of prophecy was esteemed by the pious Jews under their dispensation, in the same sense as the unction, or gift of the spirit, are esteemed under the christian, and this consideration will greatly tend to elucidate the congruity of the sacred writings, relative to this peculiar office of the son of God; for as we read in *Iſa.* lxi. 1. *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek*, &c.

So likewise the apostle to the Hebrews

brews informs us, that *God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son.* And again, to shew the preference of the latter, to the former dispensation, he writes, *For if the word spoken to us by Angels* (which would be more properly translated messengers) *was steadfast, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,* Heb. ii. 2, 3.

In short, from these and many other passages of holy writ, it appears, that the blessed Jesus, stands in a peculiar relation to his church and people as a Prophet.

Secondly. Christ stands in a peculiar manner in the relation of a Priest to his church and people.

The Priests, under the Mosaic dispensation, were persons set apart to minister in holy things, and to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people.

We have already observed concerning the Jewish rites and ceremonial law, that the rites and ceremonies of their religious institution were hieroglyphic, and intended by external representations, to convey useful instructions and spiritual knowledge.

Now a brief review of some of their particular customs, and their allusion to the offices of the Messiah, will elucidate the manner in which Christ becomes emphatically, the *Priest* of his *church and people.* To become a Priest under the law, it was necessary that there should be an immediate call from God, Numb. xviii. 7. Christ under the gospel is peculiarly ordained to the priestly office, Heb. v. 10, *Called of God an High-Priest.*

The covenant under the law was ratified by blood, *Exod.* xxx. 10. The covenant under the glorious dispensation of the gospel was ratified not by the blood of beasts, but by the blood of Christ, *who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God.*

All the ceremonies and ordinances under the law were meerly allusive and typical, or according to scripture language, *a shadow of good things to come;* but the offices of Christ, and ordinances of the gospel are real and effectual. The former could only shew the necessity of the great work which the redeemer effected. The sacerdotal function under the law was temporary; Christ is an high Priest for ever; the sacrifices under the law are represented as purifying the flesh, but the blood of Christ is represented as *purifying the conscience from dead works,* &c. In short the blessed Jesus hath by his death on the cross and intercession at the right hand of God for his people, fully completed the great office of Priesthood long described under a faint shadow, and fully accomplished all that was predicted of him.

But 3dly, Christ is represented in the Old and New Testament in the character of a king. The office of a king in a natural sense is to reign and govern, protect and defend: agreeable to this idea, when the Prophet Isaiah foretels the birth and kingdom of Christ, he speaks thus, *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, &c.* Isai. ix. 7. to the same purport the evangelist records, *Luke* i. 36. *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.*

With respect to the defence and protection which subjects in a natural sense expect from their king or prince; Christ in a spiritual sense may be particularly deemed the king or defender of his people, Isai. lxiii. 3. *I will tread them* [that is his enemies and those of his people] in mine anger, &c. There is an evident allusion between those texts, *Isai.* xi. 10. and *Rom.* xv. 12. which particularly set forth the kingly office of the blessed Jesus as it refers to the Gentiles, as also between *Psal.* cx. 1. and 1 *Cor.* xv. 25, 26. From whence it will plainly appear to the serious christian that his Saviour eminently sustains the elevated character of king or prince to his people, as he reigns over them by the greatness of his power, governs them by his laws and his spirit, defends them from their enemies, and will protect them from the wrath of God, and all the assaults of their potent and inveterate enemy, who goes about seeking whom he may devour.

Upon the whole therefore, with respect to prophecy in general, it is evident, that the *seed of the woman*, who should bruise the serpent's head, the seed promised to Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, the son promised to David, to sit on his throne for ever; and the king, who should rule out of Sion, foretold by the Prophets is *one* and the *same* person; that the purpose of God, in giving the *word of prophecy* was the same in every age; that Christ has, under different degrees of light, been set forth from the beginning as the hope of the world; that he it was whose *day* the faithful in every age, desired to see.

CHAP. VII.

On the connection of the Old and New Testament, or general agreement of the sacred writers.

THE sacred volumes which we call the BIBLE, is not a book compiled by a single author, nor by many hands acting in confederacy in the same age, in which case there would be no difficulty in composing a consistent scheme, nor would it be any wonder to find the several parts in a just and close connection; but the scriptures were done by several hands, in very different conditions of life, from the throne down to the very lowest degree, and in very distant ages through the long space of one thousand five hundred years, when the world must have put on a new face, and men must have had different interests to pursue, which naturally would have led a spirit of imposture to have valued its schemes, and to have adapted them to different stations in the world, and to the different turns and changes in every age.

David wrote about 400 years after Moses, and Isaiah about 250 after David, and Matthew more than 700 after Isaiah; and yet these authors, with all the other Prophets and Apostles, write in perfect harmony, confirming the authority of their predecessors, labouring to reduce the people to the observance of their instructions,

structions, and loudly exclaiming against the neglect and contempt of them, and denouncing the severest judgments upon such as continued disobedient.

This was the principal work of the Prophets in a long succession: and it is well known our Lord came not to destroy the law and the Prophets, but to fulfil, that is, to vindicate and illustrate their meaning, to complete what was imperfect, and to answer the highest ends of what was typical and figurative.

Now this is a very strong proof, that the Scriptures were dictated throughout by one and the same spirit, which could be no other than the Spirit of God, and of truth. It is allowed, as in the case of *Mahometism*, that an imposture, or religious fraud, may be handed down from one age to another, but not by several different persons, all making equal pretensions to a divine authority and commission; for, in that case they are to be considered, not as a succession of teachers, deriving their doctrine from one common original, but as a single and distinct impostor, and consequently every one in a distant age, and in quite a different state of things, would set up for himself, and seek a singular glory by building upon a distant and separate foundation from others.

It would signify little to an impostor, who has no other intention than to promote his own honour and interest, to pretend a commission from Heaven, only to give reputation to another deceiver, by confirming what he has already established.

Therefore as the writers of the Holy Scriptures, though they all claim a divine authority, yet write in perfect connection and harmony, mutually confirming the doctrine and testimony of each other, and concurring to establish the very same religious truths and principles, it is a strong proof that all derive their instructions from the same fountain, namely the wisdom of God, and were indeed under the direction and illumination of his Spirit.

We may take another argument from ourselves, as we make profession of faith in *Jesus Christ*; for our profession of christianity, who dwell in the uttermost part of the earth, is a proof that the gospel spread itself over all the Roman empire; for, from Jerusalem, it came to us by gradual progress, and advancing from one country to another, arrived at length in these islands.

No person can doubt or deny, that the Christian faith is, and for many ages past has been, embraced in all those numerous and distant lands, which once composed the Roman empire, and even in countries far beyond the uttermost bounds thereof. In all these spacious regions, the Christian faith, in one form or other, has been professed; and Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in one form or other, have been administered, in a succession of ages, quite up to the times of the Apostles, and of our blessed Lord.

It is most certain that Baptism and the Lord's Supper, those summaries of the whole gospel, were not invented in any following age, by any one

one party of Christians, but have been handed down to us, and to all parties amongst Christians, from the mouth and institution of *Jesus Christ*.

No fact can be more evident than this: and from our Lord therefore and his Apostles, the gospel spread over the greatest part of the known world, which before its publication was universally involved in idolatry, established by long custom, and human laws, strongly defended by all the power and learning of the world, by all the zeal of the wisest superstition, by all the blindness of profound ignorance, and by all the incorrigible perverseness of corrupt and dissolute manners; a complication of causes which would for ever bid defiance to any philosophy or wisdom of the few that can be supposed to obtain a better sense in the midst of universal darkness and depravity. But the gospel gained a most complete and extensive victory over all these, demolished the idols of the Heathen world, and every where erected the trophies of a conquering *Jesus*.

Now this surprising change, which is notorious to all mankind, must be effected either by human power and policy, or by a divine and supernatural influence.

By human power and policy, great revolutions have been brought about in all ages and parts of the world; and therefore we do not wonder at the spread of the Mahometan or Turkish religion, as it was propagated by the sword, under a mighty warrior and politician, who by ravage, bloodshed and desolation, conquered many nations and kingdoms, laid the foundation of a potent and spacious empire; and thus by violence opened a way for the reception and extensive profession of his newly devised religion. But the religion of Jesus was triumphant, not only without the aid of human power or policy, but even in direct opposition to it. The plain fact is this:

A poor person, about thirty years of age called *Jesus*, a carpenter's son, of no education or learning, without house or habitation, without the least human interest or influence, begins to preach repentance among the Jews, the most superstitious, and bigotted people in the world; declares himself the Son of God, gathers a few Disciples, persons in the same low and mean condition with himself, fishermen, publicans, and such like, and sends them about preaching, what he called the Gospel, and kingdom of God.

He was despised by the superstitious, and greatly opposed and harrassed by men of power and learning. However, he preached three or four years; when they caught him, and crucified him as an infamous malefactor.

This direful event, which would have totally ruined an impostor, he plainly foresaw and foretold; but not the least discouraged by the prospect, he commanded his Disciples to go and preach his gospel over all the world; promising that after his death, he would assist them with power from Heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed.

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They believed him; they set out; they preached up their crucified master, as the Lord and Saviour of all mankind; and which is very strange, under the conduct and influence of a master, who was dead to the world, and gone to another state! they prevailed; and in spite of the fury of the multitude, the most inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of superstition, the hatred of the Jews, the contempt of the Greeks, the power of the Romans, the pride of philosophers, and the policy of statesmen: their doctrine, like the sun, almost at once, enlightened the world, overthrew the whole system of Pagan idolatry and religion, and advanced as far as our own country, into the darkest and remotest corners of the earth.

Of this, we in this Christian age, are living monuments and proofs; many of us, it is to be hoped, have received the gospel; we own it a glorious and shining light; we have renounced the idolatry and vain conversation of our fathers; we confess and own the crucified Jesus, our king and head, and hope for eternal life and salvation through him.

Now there is no possible way of accounting for this, but by allowing that *Jesus* really was the *Son of God*, that he really rose again from the dead, and ascended up into Heaven, and that he actually from thence, sent his Disciples the aids and powers, which he had promised, and which were so far above all that is human, that they carried their own evidence along with them, and rendered their doctrine so surprizingly successful.

As Jesus did not send his Disciples to preach to all the world till after his death; and as he then, after his death did actually furnish them with all miraculous powers to render their doctrine effectual: this is the most convincing proof that the doctrine was divine, and that he himself was actually gone to Heaven, and lived there as a glorious and divine person; for that an impostor, a deceiver, hateful to the God of truth, should, after his death, be able to animate, instruct, authorize, and impower a company of men, otherwise destitute of all assistance, and labouring under all possible difficulties, to throw down all the religions of the world, and to erect a new one in their stead, is utterly impossible.

It is therefore certain, beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ was sent from Heaven to reveal the gospel to the world. As we are from hence very certain, that we have in our hands the writings of the Apostles, we may be sure, that they contain a revelation from Heaven, or that doctrine, which Christ received from God his Father, and delivered to his Disciples. If so, then the writings of the Old Testament are also the word of God, because Christ and his Apostles declare them to be such; therefore all scripture is given by inspiration.

The same thing may be proved by the long train of miraculous operations, which could be effected only

by divine power, and which were wrought in confirmation of the mission of Prophets and Apostles: as also from the spirit of prophecy, predicting future events at great distance of time, which no human sagacity could possibly foresee, and yet were actually fulfilled in correspondence to the prediction.

But as a minute detail of particulars would perhaps be somewhat tedious, we shall single out one instance of that divine, miraculous power, and the truth of the prophetic spirit; which instance has been in all ages a standing proof of revelation, and which still exists, and is before the eyes of the present generation, in almost all countries of the world: this is the present state and being of the Jews; for that people, as they were originally chosen to be the repository or store-house of divine knowledge, by the revelation which was given to them, so they were also intended to be visible proofs of the truth of it in all ages and parts of the world.

Our Lord, contrary to all human probability, while he was on earth, foretold the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity, and their dispersion among all nations, which was actually accomplished in about forty years after.

In this dispersed state they have now continued about seventeen hundred years in great numbers, and in great ignominy and contempt, and yet quite distinct and separate from all the people among whom they lived.

This appears to us a standing miracle. Nor can we attribute it to any other cause, but the will and extraordinary interposition of Heaven; when it is considered, that of all the famous nations of the world, who might have been distinguished from others, with great advantage, and the most illustrious marks of honour and renown, as the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans, who all in their turns held the empire of the world, and were, with great ambition, the lord's of mankind. Yet *these*, even in their own countries, are dissolved into the bulk of mankind; nor is there a person upon earth can boast he is descended from these renowned imperial ancestors.

Whereas a small nation, generally despised and hated; and which, though now upon pretty good terms with us, both Pagans and pretended Christians, have for many ages treated with the utmost insult, indignity, outrage, and cruelty; and therefore one would imagine every soul that belonged to it should have gladly disowned, and have been willing to have lost the odious name, by mixing with any other nation; yet this hatred people, harassed and butchered, more or less, by all mankind, banished from one country to another, have under all temptations to the contrary, and against the ordinary course of things, continued in a body distinct and separate from all mankind, even in a state of dispersion for above seventeen hundred years.

This is demonstration, that the wisdom which formed them into a peculiar

peculiar people, as they have almost ever since the deluge, for about three thousand six hundred years, remained in a distinct and separate state, and are still liable to do so, is not human but divine; for no human wisdom or power could ever form, or execute so vast, so extensive a design.

It must be the wisdom and power of that God alone, who is the same in every age, and who in every age has exercised a peculiar Providence over his peculiar people, the descendants of *Abraham*, his servant.

Thus the present state and being of the Jews is a very public and standing evidence of the truth of revelation, in two respects.

First, with regard to their long dispersion, or captivity, as they call it, and the various calamities they were to suffer therein.

This is foretold in several places, particularly, *Deut.* xxviii. 63, 64, 65. *The Lord will rejoice over you to deſtroy you, and bring you to nought.* As to their singular privileges and enjoyments, *and ye ſhall be plucked off from the land, whither ye go to poſſeſs it. And the Lord ſhall ſcatter ye among all people, from one end of the earth, even unto the other——and among the nations thou ſhalt find no eaſe, neither ſhall the ſole of thy foot have reſt; but the Lord ſhall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind.*

Again, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 19. *I ſcattered them among the Heathen, and they were diſperſed among the countries.*

And our bleſſed Lord predicts, *Luke* xxi. 24. *And they*, the Jews, *ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations; and* Jeruſalem *ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles.*

Secondly, the state and being of the Jews, is a public and standing evidence of the truth of revelation, with respect to their being preserved as a distinct and separate body.

This also was plainly predicted, *Deut.* xxvi. 44. *Yet for all that, when they be in the hand of their enemies, I will not caſt them away, neither will I abhor them, to deſtroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them. Jer.* xxx. 10, 11. *Fear not, O my ſervant Jacob, neither be diſmayed, O Iſrael; for lo, I will ſave thee from afar, and thy ſeed from the land of their captivity; for though I make a full end of all the nations, whither I have ſcattered thee; yet will I not make a full end of thee. Jer.* xxx. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the iſles afar off; and ſay, he that ſcattered Iſrael will gather him, and keep him as a ſhepherd doth his flock.*

Those, and many other passages, too numerous to be quoted, plainly shew, that it was the design of divine Providence to preserve the Jewish nation in their dispersion, and to preserve them a distinct and separate people, in order to their future restoration.

We, and many other nations at this day, see these predictions verified in the present state of the Jews, who have been so long, and still are

so

so miraculously preserved, separate from all other people.

Now this is a standing miracle, a wonderful work of divine Providence, and as strong a proof of revelation, as if we were to see the dead, every year, rise out of their graves, in confirmation of it; for we have still among us, after so long a time, and so many various revolutions in human affairs, the peculiar people, whom God, above three thousand years ago, separated unto himself: the very people who are the principal subject of revelation, and who are said there to be the principal objects of his Providence, and we see them at this day to be so in a very surprizing manner.

Therefore in their present state we may plainly read the ancient promise made to *Abraham*, the head and root of the nation, the many wonderful works wrought for them from first to last, and the truth of prophetic predictions; in the present state of the Jews, we may read the truth of the gospel, for the rejection of which, God rejected them, and scattered them over the face of the earth.

In short, we are certain there was such a people as the Jews, to whom God delivered the revelation of his will in antient time, for this very people exist among us at this day, and preserve among them that very revelation with a most sacred and religious care.

We are sure the numerous predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, relating to their future state, are true; for we see them made good in the present state of the Jews; and therefore we may be assured that the holy Scriptures are given by Inspiration of God; for only the Spirit of God could foretel such events, and the same Spirit which foretold these events, spake in the Prophets and Apostles, and inspired them with all that divine wisdom and knowledge which we find in all their writings.

We might add the long apostacy and general corruption of the profession of christianity, so plainly foretold, and under such express and particular characters, in the apostolic writings.

This all the world may see has been abundantly fulfilled in the church of Rome.

Now, only the spirit of God could foresee that such a distant and deplorable state of things, which no human probability could have conjectured, would have risen out of the pure and heavenly doctrine of Christ. But the spirit which predicted this event, is the very same which was poured out upon the Apostles, and enlightened their minds with the knowledge of the gospel; therefore the Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, had the spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By these arguments, we are pointing out the only fountain of life and happiness, a mine more valuable than of gold and precious stones; a plentiful magazine of heavenly and everlasting wealth, an inexhaustible fund of solid comfort and peace, the holy scriptures, the word of the everlasting God; a treasure of more immense value,

value, which we have in our possession, if we are wise to make a right improvement of it.

But the connection and harmony of the sacred writings will receive a farther illustration, if we trace the divine dispensations, called in the same, the *ways* and *works* of God.

The *ways of God* frequently signify the rules of life, which he hath given us to observe, *Pſ.* cxix. 3. *They alſo do no iniquity; they walk in his ways:* that is, *in the law of the Lord.*

The *works of God* may signify, the meer operations and productions of his power; but both these words have a more restricted and emphatical signification. A *way* signifies also a course of action, a custom, constitution or institution, which any person or number of persons form to themselves. *Prov.* viii. 22. *The Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.* Prov. xii. 26. *The way of the wicked,* their course of action, *ſeduceth them.* Hos. x. 13. *Becauſe thou didſt truſt in thy way,* the schemes and methods, political or religious, of thy own devising, *and in the multitude of thy mighty men.* Amos viii. 14. *The manner,* that is, the religious constitution, *of* Beersheba *liveth,* subsists, flourishes, notwithstanding the opposition made to it.

Hence *ways* and *works,* signify the appointments, constitutions, or dispensations of God, by which we are to understand.

"The schemes or methods devi-
"sed and carried on by the wisdom
"and goodness of God to discover
"or shew himself, his nature and
"will, his beneficence and justice,
"to the minds of his reasonable
"creatures, for their instruction, dis-
"cipline, and reformation in order
"to promote their happiness."

These are the great ends of the divine dispensations, as set forth to us in the sacred word, which uniformly tends to promote the same; and these are the principal points to be attended to in the explication of them.

The great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given existence to a world of human beings such as we are. He therefore is our father, and we are his off-spring, whom he hath created in love, that in a right use of the means he hath graciously afforded us, we might be qualified for honour and immortality in the heavenly world.

This seems to be the highest design the divine goodness can form, and the highest excellency to which our nature can attain.

This may be considered as the basis of all the divine dispensations from the beginning of the world; for unless heavenly dispositions are implanted in our minds, we cannot be qualified for honour and enjoyment. It is therefore becoming the father of our spirits, and suitable to the nature of our capacities and circumstances, that proper means be provided for our instruction and discipline.

For instance. As God is not the object of any of our senses, and can be seen only by our understandings, it is proper that he should set before us, in the frame and furniture of the world, such visible and various dis-

plays of his being, power, wisdom, justice, and kind regard, as may engage our attention, discover his eternal godhead, and lead us to the acknowledgment, adoration, love and dutiful obedience to our creator, father, and benefactor.

These are the works, the dispensations, or constitutions of nature, whereby the Almighty, as in a glass, has discovered himself to the thoughts and eyes of his creatures here below.

But besides the constitution of universal nature, there are a variety of dispensations, which are more immediately relative to mankind; as the being born of parents to supply the several generations of the world, whence result sundry relations and duties; the being sustained by food; covered and sheltered by clothes and habitations; healed by physicians; taught by the learned and skillful; the infirmities, appetites, and passions of our constitution; the forming societies for mutual help and commerce; the institution of government, or the subordination of some to the authority of others, for preserving good order, for the protection of virtue, and punishment of vice.

Add to these, wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, and such like events; all these may be reckoned among the divine appointments or dispensations, some for the exercise of our rational faculties in right action; some for discipline, correction, and reformation; but none meerly for destruction, except where reformation cannot be effected.

But these ways or dispensations, which in scripture are considered as the great hinges of divine Providence, on which his dealings with mankind have turned; or as the principal events, by which the great purposes and counsels of God's will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto; because right conceptions of these, under their circumstances and connections, will greatly contribute to the explaining of scripture divinity, and demonstrating the harmony and agreement of sacred writ.

Let us therefore take a general survey of them.

First, The creation of the world, as already considered

Secondly, The formation of man, after the image of God.

Thirdly, Man being subjected to trial, in order to prove his obedience, yielded to temptation; sinned, and so became liable to the threatening of death. But,

Fourthly, God, not willing to destroy his creature, was graciously pleased in his infinite mercy and goodness, not only to mitigate his heavy sentence, but also to introduce a new dispensation of grace in the hands of an all-glorious mediator; at the same time subjecting the human race to a labourious life, to diseases and death temporal; and thus in great goodness, to subdue the fleshly principle, to shew the atrocious nature of sin, and by setting forth the pride, vanity, and self-sufficiency of the creature, turn his regard more steadily to the all-sufficient creator.

5. But men multiplying in the earth, abused the goodness of God, and in about 1656 years time, became

came so wicked, that *all flesh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence.* Then to purge the world from iniquity, and to recover it to a state of righteousness, God created a new thing in the earth, and by a deluge of water, destroyed that wicked generation, preserving the only family, that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propagate piety and obedience in the new. At the same time and for the same good purposes, he reduced human life into much narrower bounds.

6. Not long after the deluge, to prevent a second general corruption, God introduced another dispensation by confounding the language of mankind; which divided the world into several distinct societies, and consequently kept them under a stricter government, and better preserved their liberties, than if the world had been one great empire.

7. Thus the outrage of violence and rapine was, in a good measure cured. But now mankind fell into a different iniquity, namely, that of idolatry, whereby, within 400 years after the flood, the worship and knowledge of the only true God was in danger of being utterly lost. To prevent this, the divine wisdom erected a new dispensation by calling Abraham from among his idolatrous kindred, and constituting his family the storehouse and standard of divine knowledge.

To them he spoke and revealed himself at sundry times, and in divers manners, and separated them from the rest of the world, by peculiar laws, and religious ceremonies, to secure them from the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar people distinguished above all other nations but with a view to the future great benefit of all nations; and to this day, blessed be God, we experience the happy effects of this noble scheme, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very being of a gospel church.

8. The family of Abraham, by the divine conduct, was led into Egypt; and when they had been there, under grievous oppression 215 years, and were grown numerous enough to be a nation, God set himself at the head of them, as their king; and in a country much esteemed for learning and arts, whither men of genius and curiosity resorted from all other parts. Upon this stage, so proper, because public, God, as the king of Israel, combated the king of Egypt, and his fictitious Gods, and displayed his infinitely superior power both to destroy and save, by many plagues inflicted upon the land of Egypt; and by bringing out the Israelites in opposition to all the force of the king, and all the obstacles of nature, and settling them, after they had been sufficiently disciplined in the wilderness in the land of Canaan.

Here God set up his peculiar kingdom amongst them, and they alone of all the nations of the earth were the subjects of it, and happy in its singular privileges and blessings; but at the same time were exercised with various providential dispensations; the general rule of which

was

was this; while they adhered to the worship of the true God, they were always prosperous; when they declined to idolatry, they were either oppressed at home, or carried captive into other countries.

9. The long captivity in Babylon was not only a punishment to the Jews, but also a method of publishing the knowledge of the true God over all the Babylonish empire, as appears evidently in the book of *Daniel*.

The division of the Grecian empire, which put an end to the Persian, after the death of *Alexander*, caused a new dispersion of the Jews, especially in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, and Lybia, where their synagogues were very common.

Lastly, when they were subjected to the Roman power, their God and religion became more known all over the Roman empire.

Thus the way for the kingdom of the Messiah was gradually prepared; for though the knowledge of God received from the Jews, made no public reformation of Pagan idolatry, yet it greatly disposed men to receive the gospel, when it should be preached unto them. Some became Jews, many renounced idolatry, and worshipped no other but the living and true God, who, in the acts of the Apostles are called *devout Proselytes, Greeks, those that feared God*.

10. Thus we are brought to the *Coming of Christ*, who came *in the fullness of time*, for he came as soon as God by the various methods of his Providence, had prepared the world to receive him. When God *had made ready a people prepared for him*, then Christ came, and fully explained the nature, laws, extent, and glory of the kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and most excellent design of divine wisdom, by giving himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the world.

11. Then the great mystery of God, the calling of other nations, besides the Jews into his kingdom and church, was opened, and made manifest by the preaching of the gospel. For this purpose, he sent out his Apostles, furnished with proper powers and credentials, especially the gift of tongues, whereby they were enabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to people of different countries; and by this means, the glad tidings of salvation and the glorious lights and privileges of the gospel, have reached even unto us in Great Britain who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth.

12. But as *Christ* came to restore, to explain, and by the most glorious promises, to inforce the law of nations; and consequently as his design was to erect an universal religion, which should recommend itself to all people, under their several political distinctions, and which therefore was to interfere with no political establishments, but should leave them, in every country, just as it found them, teaching the nations to observe the will of God as contained in his sacred word, in the hope of eternal life: upon this grand,

noble,

noble, and extensive plan, the Jewish polity would be sunk to a level with all other national governments; and the Jew on account of any prior, national advantages, would have no more claim to the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, than any of the Gentiles or nations, who in any of the most barbarous and despised parts of the earth should receive the faith of the gospel: for in the Christian religion, *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor un-circumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ*, that is, the faith and obedience, or true religion, which Christ taught; *is all, and in all*, Col. iii. 11. Thus the Jew is fallen by that very method of divine wisdom and grace, which brought salvation to other nations. Thus the *diminishing of the Jews, is the riches of the world, and the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world*, Rom. xi. 12, 15. or the opening a door for the whole world, to come into the peculiar kingdom of God. This is the idea we ought to have of the rejection of the Jews. The grace of God was, and is still, as free to them as to other people, upon their embracing the gospel; but their political constitution from henceforth gave them no distinction nor privilege in the kingdom of God above the rest of mankind.

Soon after the publication of the gospel, their polity and civil constitution, which otherwise would have remained in full force, and have obliged them to obey its laws, as much as the constitutions of the other kingdoms of the world obliged their respective subjects; were quite overthrown, by the destruction of the temple, and the expulsion of the Jews out of the land of Canaan, which they have not been able to recover, but remain dispersed over the face of the whole earth to this day. Thus the gospel dispensation was erected, and spread and prevailed every where.

13. The next of God's works was the permitting and managing a grand apostacy and corruption of religion in the Christian church, foretold by the Apostles, and at large foretold in the book of the revelation.

After the Apostles were removed out of the world, it pleased God to leave some of the professors of the gospel, in matters of religion, to their own ignorance, passions, and prejudices.

Thus the Christian faith by degrees was depraved, till the *Man of Sin* arose, a tyrannical usurped power, domineering over, and imposing upon conscience, forbidding the use of understanding, and intoxicating the inhabitants of the earth with false and delusive learning, worldly pomp and splendour, religious sorcery, and cruel persecution of the truth.

This, as it was the properest means of producing the most eminent and noble characters, was to be a long and severe trial of the faith and patience of the Saints. In the times of this sad dispensation, it is certain, we are now living; but we hope towards the latter end of it. Through the whole course of it, God hath variously appeared, both in wrath upon

upon the corrupters of religion; and in mercy for the comfort and support of those who oppose them.

Thus the wheels of Providence moved on, till the morning of reformation appeared in our happy land, which for some centuries had been gradually advancing and still continues to advance towards the perfect day; for a spirit of religious liberty, which hath been long oppressed, revives and gains strength; the Scriptures are more carefully studied, ecclesiastical persecution and tyranny under every form more generally detested; and things seem to have a tendency towards love, unity and concord, the most perfect state of religion in this world.

14. This must afford satisfaction to every good man who will cheerfully join his endeavours to bring on the next glorious dispensation, which we have in prospect, when the *myſtery of God* with regard to the aforesaid corrupt state of religion, *ſhall be finiſhed*, when Babylon, in all its principles and powers shall fall; when the *holy city*, the *new Jeruſalem*, shall come down from Heaven, and God shall set up a pure and happy state of the church.

15. How long that state will continue, we cannot ascertain, or have we any further clear discoveries of God's works, till the awful day of resurrection, when the Lord himself shall in person descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Arch-Angel, and the trump of God. *Then all they that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake*, and shall be judged, *ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame, and everlaſting contempt. And they that be wiſe*, under any of the changes and dispensations of this present world, *ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament; and they that* work together with God, and endeavour to *turn many unto righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever.*

Thus have we endeavoured to give a sketch of the works of God from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things; and very beautiful and surprising would the whole appear, could we see them in a full and clear light, as they are held forth to our view in the sacred writings, of the harmony and agreement of which they are, among other considerations, an undoubted evidence.

As Scripture is the best explication of Scripture, we shall make some general remarks, founded on the same, which will greatly assist our conceptions of, and enquiries into these very important points.

1. All the divine dispensations are agreeable to the most perfect rules of righteousness and truth. Nothing false, unjust, or injurious, can be charged on the ways and works of the Almighty; for (*Deut.* xxxii. 4.) *all God's ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; juſt and right is he*, Ps. cxlv. 17, *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy*, steadily acting according to truth, *in all its works.*

2dly, The ways of God are not to be considered as the effect of necessity, as if the end proposed could not possibly have been gained by other

other means; but as the result of choice, or divine wisdom, preferring such particular methods to any other, as the best adapted to our circumstances, or all these considered, as the most likely to make mankind wise and happy.

For instance, it is by the dispensation of God, that our present life is sustained by food; not because it is impossible we should live in any other way, for the Almighty could sustain our life in perfect health by an act of his own immediate power. Again our food is produced by the influence of the sun, by rain, the fertility of the ground: not because food could not be otherwise produced, for God could by an immediate act of his own power, create food for us every day, as he did for the Israelites in the wilderness: but this method of sustaining our life is a continuance of divine wisdom, to shew himself to our understandings, and to exercise our industry in providing a subsistence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the works of God, in scripture, are assigned to his wisdom, *see Pſal.* civ. 24. *Prov.* viii. 24.

3dly, All the dispensations of God are calculated to promote obedience to his holy will; or to promote holiness of heart and life. This is the line which runs through the whole; for, however our circumstances may differ from those of our first parents, the end of our being is the same as theirs, and we, as well as they are upon trial, that we by grace may have habits of holiness confirmed in us, and be fitted for eternal life, which is the *inheritance of thoſe that are ſanctified.*

Though it is a melancholy reflection to consider, how the wickedness of men, hath from time to time abused the patience of God, yet it must give pleasure to observe, how his goodness hath applied various remedies to prevent or heal the corruptions of mankind.

In whatsoever way they have gone astray from him, his wisdom has never been at a loss to find out the most proper expedients to reclaim them. His gracious design is evidently to save a sinful world, and to carry religion both in its personal influences, and general prevalence, to the highest perfection our present condition will admit.

This remark most naturally suggests the following observation in proof of the authenticity and divine original of the scriptures which we call *the Bible.*

"If such a design, namely the salvation of a sinful world and the perfection of holiness shall appear to run through the books of the Old and New Testament, a man may, with infinitely greater propriety, suppose the most perfect drama, to have been written by a number of the greatest mad-men or idiots, by piecemeal, in different ages; than imagine a thread of such an end and mean running through above forty writers, in no less than 1600 years, to be the work of so many Enthusiasts. Or, we may as well suppose the world to be framed by meer chance, or the most magnificent beautiful and convenient palace, that the imagination can

can figure to itself, to be built by men unacquainted with all the rules of architecture, in several distant ages, and without any model to build by, and to be supported by meer chance; or imagine such an unity of design (as is described under this third remark) to be the result of Enthusiasm and accident mixed together." Lord *Barrington's* essay on the divine dispensation. Part 1. Preface page 26.

4. The Scriptural dispensations, which have been consecrated, were severally adapted to the different capacities and improvements, as also to the moral state and circumstances of mankind. The several ages may be compared to the several stages of human life, infancy, youth, manhood and old age.

Now, as man under due culture gradually improves in knowledge and wisdom, from infancy to old age, so we may conceive of the world, as gradually improving in mental and religious attainments under several divine dispensations: which dispensations have in every period been suitable to the improvements in knowledge, which then subsisted in the world.

Adam, when created, may be considered as a child without knowledge, learning and experience, and therefore the dispensation he was under, was very different from that, which we are under, who enjoy the benefit and light of so many preceding dispensations.

Thus mankind, reflecting upon preceding dispensations, will be admonished and directed to reform old errors and corruptions; and thus, even the monstrous apostacy of the church of Rome, may serve to introduce and establish the most perfect state of Christianity, that we expect will succeed the dispensation, under which we live.

5. All God's dispensations have a practical tendency, or direct to holiness or obedience to his law. By none of his works did God intend to render wickedness impracticable; and he has always provided sufficient support for integrity and virtue. With this very sentiment, the prophecy in *Daniel*, and in the *Revelation*, is sealed up, *Rev.* xxii. 11. *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill.* That is to say, there is no cure for the obstinately blind and wicked; neither are the ways of God intended to purify those who will not be made clean; but after all that God has done, *The wicked (Dan.* xii. 10.) *ſhall* be left *to do wickedly. And none of the wicked will underſtand, but the wiſe will underſtand. But he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill; and he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.* Hos. xiv. 9. *Who is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe things? prudent, and he ſhall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them.* The sincere and upright, who chuse the way of truth, or turn from sin unto righteousness, the righteous and merciful God will never forsake.

They make a wise improvement of his dispensations; and under all trials and afflictions, he will guide and support them; and their path shall be as the

the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

6. *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world, saith the Apostle James.* Then all God's works were formed and planned in his counsels, and lay under his eye in one comprehensive view, and therefore must be perfectly consistent.

One uniform scheme must be laid, and one even thread of design must run through the whole. They are not the result of sudden, incoherent thoughts, but a well-digested plan, formed upon the justest principles by him, who seeth all his works from the beginning to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not discern one coherent design in the divine dispensations; or if we make any one part clash with the rest, we may be sure we do not understand them.

Goodness was the principle of creation, God made man because he delighted to communicate being and happiness, consequently goodness and fatherly love, which was the beginning and foundation of God's works, must run equally through them all, from first to last.

7. Previous notice was given of some of the principal dispensations, either for warning, or to prepare men for the reception of them.

The deluge was preached by *Noah* one hundred and twenty years before it came to pass.

The Jewish dispensation was predicted to *Abraham* four hundred and thirty years before-hand.

Jeremiah foretold the Babylonish captivity, and *Paul* and *John* at large predicted and described the grand apostacy.

But the coming of the *Messiah*, and the gospel-dispensation, run through the whole, from the beginning to the end, in a less or greater degree of light; and it was fitting that this, which is the chief of God's works, should receive the brightest testimony from prophecy; therefore it was fit it should not be introduced, till it had received that evidence, which in scripture is called the *Fullness of Time*, Gal. iv. 4.

8. The dispensations of God are intended for our study and contemplation; and it is a singular advantage to form right notions of them, because they will enlarge our conception of God, and influence our dispositions toward him.

If we judge truly of God's works, we shall have honourable ideas of the divine agent. His wisdom, his goodnesss and truth, will stand in a fair light, and we shall confess him infinitely worthy of our highest regard. Then we shall think of God with admiration, pleasure and delight, (Ps. xcii. 4. *Thou Lord hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hand)* and shall serve and follow him with willing minds.

But if we form such conceptions of the ways of God, as represent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconsistent with all our notions of justice and goodness, the effect of sovereign will, without either reason or love, he must stand before our thoughts in the most frightful colours. The most horrible gloom will be drawn over

the perfections of the best of beings, our minds will be filled with darkness and dread; and if we worship him at all, our worship and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of sons; but the joyless, constrained drudgery of slaves.

9. It must be remembered, that the works of God are unsearchable, and past finding out to perfection. Ps. xcii. 5. *O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep.* From a just sense of the unfathomable nature of the divine dispensation, the Apostle concludes a discourse upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this solemn exclamation, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments! And his ways past finding out,* Rom. ix. 33.

It becomes us to admire and adore the counsels of infinite wisdom, and to aquiesce, where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them, *Rev.* xv. 13. *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!* We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their full extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connections. He therefore that is wise, will not cavil at them, nor foolishly endeavour to pry into them, beyond the bounds of revelation, and of human understanding.

10. Under all our present darkness, and under every dispensation, an honest heart sincerely desirous to know the truth, is seriously inquisitive after it, meekly submissive to what God hath revealed and commanded; willing to work together with him; patiently persevering in well-doing; such a temper, and such a conduct, is the best and safest guide under every dispensation, will enable us to follow God, to comply with every design of his Providence, to overcome in every hour of trial, and will lead us to eternal life.

To such a character, as well as to *Daniel* (chap. xii. 13) It is the language of divine grace and goodness--- *But walk thou,* thou honest, upright man, *thy way to the end;* take courage and comfort, walk on, persevere in the path of truth, and integrity: for after all the trials and disquietudes of this world, *Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot,* the lot of the pious and faithful souls, *at the end of the days.*

Having thus endeavoured to demonstrate the connection of the Old and New Testament, or harmony and agreement of the sacred writers, by various proofs and arguments drawn from the state, circumstances and conditions of the writers, the nature of their subjects and the divine dispensations in general, and subjoined such remarks as may tend to instruct and improve the serious Christian in the knowledge of his holy profession, we propose in the following chapter, in order to guard him from the reigning infidelity of the age, to consider some of the most general objections that are brought against a divine revelation; and to give such answers as we have collected from the ablest divines, and found by our own observation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Anſwers to divers Objections brought againſt the Scripture as a divine Revelation.

WE ſhall begin with the most general.

Objection. *Revelation is abſolutely needleſs; nature and reaſon being ſufficient to direct any man in the plain way of his duty, without any ſupernatural aſſiſtance.*

Anſwer. It must be allowed, in general, that nature and reason are sufficient to direct any man in the way of his duty, so far as God, in that circumstance expects duty from him; for God expects duty from every person only in proportion to the light he enjoys, and to the talents he has received.

But the experience of all mankind shews, that nature and reason by themselves, will advance but a little way in the knowledge of divine things.

Persons in a land like ours, where, in spite of themselves, their nature and reason are enlightened and directed in a considerable degree by revelation, may talk of the sufficiency and perfection of nature and reason; but if we look into those nations, which are perfect strangers to revelation, we shall find them grossly ignorant of the being and perfection of God, the dispensations of his Providence, the proper honour and worship that is due to him; the prayers we may address to his goodness, and the hopes we may entertain of his acceptance.

They know nothing of the pardon of sin, the promises of God's mercy and blessing, nor of any thing belonging to the covenant of love, the present privileges, or future glories of his kingdom,

The resurrection from the dead, the day of judgment, the immortal life, which will be the reward of the pious and just, and the everlasting death, which will be the sad lot of all the impenitently wicked, they are altogether, or in a great measure unacquainted with. But all these are great principles in religion, and of great force, to purify our spirits, enable our minds, animate our hopes, and guard us against the power and influence of bodily appetites and the violence of temptation.

However others may fare, in a great degree of darkness and ignorance, through the favourable allowance of God; yet surely every man's reason will tell him, that superior knowledge, and a more extensive view of the divine dispensations, are absolutely necessary to a higher degree of goodness, comfort, obedience, and devoutness to God.

What the Poets relate may be true, that some primitive mortals subsisted only on acorns and water, in dens and caves; and we know there are some parts of the world where the naked inhabitants enjoy very few conveniencies of life: but shall we therefore despise the blessing of agriculture, and the various accommodations which make life happy and comfortable, and say they are needless?

less? would any man in this land think of turning out naked into the fields and woods because it is possible, and may somewhere in fact be true, that man may live upon wild fruit and water, without cloaths, or any habitation, but the dens and caves of the earth? corn, and other agreeable food, cloaths, and commodious habitations, are necessary to our kind and degree of life in the natural world, and so is revelation to a corresponding degree and kind of spiritual life.

The food, raiment, and habitations we enjoy, are the gift of God's goodness; and it is our duty to accept and use them with thankfulness.

In like manner, revelation is the gift of God, and, as such, it ought to be received; and as it gives greater light, we are obliged to attend accordingly to it, because we must, in the nature of things, be accountable for it.

We may add upon this head, that however nature and reason in their pure and most perfect state, may be sufficient to direct us in the way of duty; yet when nature is corrupted, and reason obscured, or almost extinguished, men are by no means sufficient to restore and recover themselves, to the knowledge and obedience of the truth, because they themselves, who should be the means of healing themselves, are sick and disabled. But it was the primary intention of revelation to restore and preserve the knowledge of God and of his will, in a corrupt and degenerate world.

So far therefore we see no objection against revelation; but it may be both very needful, and a very great blessing to mankind.

Objection. *If this bleſſing* (Revelation) *was given to all mankind, who all equally ſtand in need of it; but whereas it is confined only to a part of mankind, while others are left to grope in the dark, how can it be accounted the gift of divine goodneſs? For is not God equally the God, father and preſerver of all men? How then can it be conſiſtent with his beneficence to confine the light of Revelation to ſome which would ſo much contribute to the happineſs of all? May we not then conclude, that a partial revelation is no revelation from God, nor worthy of our regard?*

Anſwer. It is very certain, that God is the preserver of all men, that he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. But while we are sure of this, we are not equally sure, that our reason is a perfect rule for adjusting the distribution of his benefits.

On the other hand, we may be very sure that it is not. From the lowest to the highest degree of existence, from a grain of sand to the most glorious angel in heaven, every higher degree of being is an incontestable proof, that God may very justly, according to his own wisdom and good pleasure, bestow what gifts, endowments, privileges and advantages upon his creatures he sees fit. He is debtor to none. Our understanding is no measure of his wisdom, neither are his dispensations to be censured by our narrow and imperfect judgments.

Indeed

Indeed it seems as reasonable to make an objection against the goodness of divine Providence, because all men are not rich alike; wise alike; or learned alike.

Would not that man appear very weak, who should be displeased that God had given him abundance of the good things of this life, because there are many about him in a low condition? Would not that man appear very absurd, who should deem his superior knowledge and learning to be no valuable advantage, because there are numbers of illiterate persons, who are much below him in understanding?

Is it not then equally absurd to deny divine Revelation, or to argue against it, as improperly bestowed, and unworthy of the divine goodness, because it is not communicated to all the world, as well as to ourselves? It is very unnatural to dispute against goodness in any respect, and very presumptuous to direct God how to bestow it, either as to quantity, quality, or extent.

If it is fact, that he has given us any blessing, our duty surely is to be thankful and to enjoy and improve it, whether he has bestowed more or less upon our fellow-creatures, being certain, where less is given, less will be required; and that the judge of the whole earth will, in the last day, deal with all in perfect equity and goodness.

Objection. *If Revelation is such a blessing, surely it would appear in the fruits and effects of it. Whereas great numbers, if not the generality of those that enjoy Revelation, are as bad as the very heathens, who are absolute strangers to it.*

Besides, such evils have been produced, such variance, discord, and bloody persecutions, on account of revealed religion, that it may justly be questioned, whether it has not done more harm than good.

What reason then have we to say, it is a valuable gift, or worthy of the father of the universe?

Answer. *Natural* causes, by a sort of necessity, produce their *proper* effects; so fire always burns combustible matter; and a good medicine heals a disease; and that is no fire, which will not burn proper matter, nor that a good medicine, which never heals a disease.

But *moral* causes are of a different nature, because their efficacy depends upon the choice and disposition of the subjects to whom they are applied; therefore a moral means or cause may be in itself most excellent, though it happens to produce no good effects; nay, though accidently, it may prove the occasion of very bad effects.

Our Lord's ministry and doctrine was perfectly divine, and yet it had but a small influence for good upon the Jewish nation; nay, on the other hand, excited their malice to that degree, that they slew the prince of life.

Whatever effect therefore Revelation may have produced in the world, still it is true, that it is a valuable gift, and worthy of the divine goodness. But it must even be remembered, that it is absolutely necessary to our receiving any benefits from the gospel, that

we be truly desirous to shake off the yoke of sin, and to cultivate and improve our minds in virtue and true holiness. If therefore we expect there is any life or power provided in the gospel, which will have a good effect, while the mind is utterly averse to its doctrines and precepts, we deceive ourselves.

The gospel encourages no such expectations, that are utterly inconsistent with the grand design of revealing the grace and mercy of God which is to awaken our consciences and to excite us to care and diligence in our spiritual concerns.

It is acknowledged that our own thoughts, desires, and endeavours will effect but little, without the help of divine power; but yet, if we chuse to live in ignorance, unbelief, or any branch of impiety and wickedness; if our hearts are so attached to the world, so engrossed by business, sensual pleasures and amusements, that we can spare no serious reflections for God, our souls and a future world; there is no prospect of our being saved by any grace that the gospel has provided in Jesus Christ.

It is certain, that the gospel has produced many good effects, and will always do so, where it is received and attended to; but as for those persons who make it the occasion of variance, hatred, and persecution; it cannot be said of them with any propriety, that they do receive or attend to Revelation; nay, it is very certain, that in fact, they do not.

Nor must we allow, that in popish countries, where corruption of manners greatly prevails, and superstition, idolatry, and persecution are established, they enjoy the benefit of Revelation, when we know that for many ages, the use of the scriptures has been forbidden, and a religion taught and professed, which is foreign to the word of God.

Objection. *How can we be sure, that we have now in possession, those very books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded? May they not in length of time be lost or quite altered from what they were at first? Or so varied and changed by transcribers and translators, that we cannot be sure that we have the true and genuine sense of scripture.*

Answer. No nation in the world can be more sure of any of their publick acts and records, preserved in their archives with the utmost care, than we are of the truth of the scriptures now in our hands. The Jews preserved the books of Moses, as the laws of the kingdom, in the most sacred part of their tabernacle, and temple. Those books, after they returned from Babylon, were every where publicly read in their synagogues, every week on the sabbath-day; their learned men with the utmost exactness inspected and guarded the text, even so as to count the very number of letters in every book.

In short our Lord and the Apostles frequently quote Moses, the Psalms, and Prophets, without any intimation that those books were in any respect altered or depraved. Whereas had they indeed been corrupted, we need not doubt but our blessed Saviour, would have reformed that, as well as, or rather more than any other instance

stance of corruption among the Jews.

From the time of our Saviour, the scriptures of the Old Testament, were publicly read by the Jews in all parts of the world; and those scriptures and the apostolic writings as they came out, were read by christians every where in their assemblies, and dispersed over all the world where the religion of Jesus was professed; as containing the laws and rules of the religion he taught, insomuch that it was impossible to corrupt or deprave them. For this reason even the church of Rome, or those who erected that antichristian power, never durst attempt to make the least alteration in the scriptures, as knowing it would be to no purpose; but instead of that they claimed the sole right of interpreting the scriptures, which served their end full as well as corrupting them; for he who has power to put what sense he pleases upon a law, may as effectually make it void, as he who abolishes it.

As for transcribers, or translators, it is for the same reason impossible they should make any material alteration; it is in fact true, that they have not; for you may take any translation, in any language, or by any party among christians, papists as well as protestants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of our Lord God, and the several duties to which we are thereby obliged, though they may differ in some things, and commentators may put their own sense upon others. But the main points have been preserved pure and entire in every translation from the beginning to this day.

Thus it is presumed these objections, which are the principal that are alledged, are effectually removed. Upon the whole they seem not to proceed from a sober mind, sincerely desirous of the best knowledge and instruction, for how can that person be deemed a true scholar, or sincerely desirous of improving in useful learning, who meeting with a book excellently adapted to that purpose, refuses to make use of it, because he is already possessed of the faculty of reason, or because it is not in the hands of every body, as some have made a bad use of it, or he doubts whether it may not have undergone some alteration, when the book in itself considered, is an excellent performance, and capable of giving him the most profitable instruction.

The Bible, as we now have it in our hands, thanks be to God, is by far the most excellent book in our language, and as we have it in our translation, in itself, setting aside all circumstances, a pure and plentiful fountain of divine knowledge, and particularly of the gospel of our salvation: So that whoever studies the Bible, the English Bible, is sure of gaining the knowledge and faith, which if duly applied to the heart and conversation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life.

For this reason then it is our wisdom and duty, to be frequent in reading, and meditating upon the Bible, that our minds being well furnished with heavenly wisdom, and our hearts tinctured with a divine spirit, we may be

be prepared for glory, honour, and immortality.

These objections have been answered, not so much from a design of convincing the cavilling, obstinate infidel, as a desire of satisfying the mind and conscience of the sincere believer, that his faith is founded on the most substantial grounds, and that notwithstanding all the art and sophistry of the enemies of the gospel, the most solid reasons are to be assigned for the hope that is in him, and the confidence he reposes in the God of all grace, mercy, and truth.

CHAP. IV.

On the Neceſſity of an extraordinary Revelation from God, as deduced from the depraved State of human Nature.

THE Scriptures as contained in the Bible are the word of God, they are the language and address of the universal Father to his children in this world, whom he addresses in the character of Sovereign Lord of the Universe, and strictly enjoins to obey his voice, the Scriptures are given *by Inſpiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

The glory of God indeed is to be seen in all the works of his hands; and the speech of his Almighty power, wisdom, and goodness is to be heard in the appearances of creation which are daily before our eyes, *Pſal.* xix. 1. &c.

Mankind in a faithful use of their natural powers might know God, *Rom.* i. 19. *For that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them, (for the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made,)* so that even the Heathens, who have no other rule than the light of nature, THEY might be *without excuſe*, if they are totally ignorant of God.

But how much mankind in all ages have abused and misapplied their understandings is notoriously evident, and therefore it must be evident how much they stand in need of an extraordinary revelation, to correct their errors, to reduce them to the obedience of God, and to secure them from relapsing into idolatry, and apostasy from him.

No book certainly can contain more evident marks of such relation, than the Scriptures, eminently so called, which we are happily possessed of. In them we have the fullest and clearest account of the nature and perfection of God, beyond what the world at best could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary course of things, have been preserved through succeeding generations.

The knowledge of God not being a meer speculative truth, but having near connection with our action; would consequently, as the morals of men are very liable to be corrupted, have been proportionably obscured, till it had in a manner vanished away, which we know hath in fact been true.

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In the Scriptures, as in a durable storehouse, not to be demolished by time, as uncertain tradition, we have the most noble discoveries of the nature and perfection of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner, Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his attributes, as he is infinite, and independent, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, knowledge, wisdom and power, as perfectly holy, good, righteous and true.

These glories of his divine nature are described, not in the way of philosophical dissertations; not by a series of abstract reasoning, which are of little or no use to the bulk of mankind, who have but little leisure, and perhaps less inclination to attend to the curious and abstruse deductions of reason; not thus are the glories of the divine nature delineated in Scripture, but exhibited in a long, easy and intelligible series of facts and events, wherein God hath manifested his goodness, wisdom, power and justice, from the beginning of the world.

In this way the mind, with very little labour of thought, is at once convinced of the being and perfections of God, and struck with admiration, reverence, love, and those other actions, which the knowledge of God should produce in us.

In the Scriptures, God appears not only in every view that the most profound philosophy can discover, but also in a practical light. We are there taught, that great as he is in himself, he is our God and Father, that he hath from his own immensity of being, given us being; that he constantly regards us, interests himself in our affairs, is concerned for our welfare; that our safety is in his favour, and that in his favour, and under his protection, we are infinitely safe and happy; that we are accountable to him for our actions; that we are continually under his eye; that he hath taken us into the nearest relation to himself, and that in order to promote our future and eternal happiness, he hath carried on various dispensations from the beginning of the world.

Thus we not only in the easiest and clearest way, learn the perfections of God from scripture, but we learn them in a manner the most proper and powerful to engage and unite our hearts to God, and cause us to consider ourselves infinitely interested in his attributes and perfections.

In the Scriptures we may not only with ease learn our duty in the fullest extent, but at the same time, by the numerous examples of pious men in all ages, we may see that it is practicable, and may see how to engage in it. By reading the Scriptures, we may discern the reasonableness and the beauty of holiness, and also be furnished with the strongest arguments and motives to embrace it and to persevere therein. We are also assured in sacred writ of the divine aid and assistance in our duties, trials and temptations; of the divine consolation and encouragement in all our troubles and distresses; and if, through the divine

grace, we persevere in faith and holiness, of everlasting glory in the realms of bliss.

In this sacred treasure we have the truest and most effectual rules, whereby to form our lives; not simple propositions, not meer lectures of dull morality, but instructions intermixed with the promise of a divine power to work mightily in us, and renew us into the divine life and spiritual nature.

Here religion appears in all its truth, lustre, sweetness and majesty. Here it is arrayed in all its charms, not as a sour, severe, morose, gloomy principle, forbidding enjoyment, and the parent only of sorrow, horror and despair; but as our life, our glory, our peace, our joy, as giving us the truest relish and enjoyment of life, as the source of the most solid pleasure and comfort, uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the arms of Almighty love and goodness, as leading to and preparing for endless joy and pleasure at his right hand.

As to sin and wickedness, philosophers have said much concerning the odious nature of vice, that it is evil, and the worst of evils, that it is the disease and deformity of the mind, pernicious to the health of the body, and ruinous to the worldly interest.

Their reflections were so far just; but the benefit of them were confined to men of letters and study; the common people received little or no advantage from them: but in the scriptures, the meanest minds are favoured with far better instructions than they could give.

There sin is not only set forth in all its odious colours, in all its pernicious effects, as to the present life, but its deadly nature is demonstrated as it stands in contrariety to God, as it is the transgression of his holy law, as it exposeth us to his displeasure, and is opposite to all the ends of our creation, and consequently as deserving of death.

In scripture we learn, that God will punish the impenitent workers of iniquity with everlasting destruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offends. All this is so plainly and powerfully inculcated upon the mind, by many dreadful examples of the divine vengeance upon ungodly men throughout the whole series of scripture history, by many express declarations of God's wrath, and so many exhortations of his goodness and mercy, to turn from every evil way, that no one who carefully and seriously reads the scriptures, can miss, not only of seeing the evil, the irregularity and deformity of sin, but of having his mind affected with it, and being wrought into the most settled detestation of it.

With regard to pardon of sin, the wisest of philosophers seem to have had little or no notion of it. They considered it very superficially, as repugnant to the divine perfections, and therefore say little or nothing, whether God would be propitious to sinners, or in what way his wisdom thought proper to pardon transgression.

Sacrifices

Sacrifices were frequent among them; but they seem to have understood but little of their true nature and end, nor were at all solicitous to enquire into them. In fact they did not understand the true demerit of sin, and therefore of course must be in the dark as to the remission of it. But all these things are open and obvious to the weakest capacity in scripture.

How much the world was in the dark about a future state, without a revelation, is well known; and how clearly the world to come is opened to us in the awful prospects of eternal happiness, or endless perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever so little acquainted with the gospel of Christ.

These things duly attended to, will shew the precious value of the holy scripture, that God's word is truth, and able to make us wise unto salvation, and further demonstrate that it is our duty to be much in reading them.

Reading the scriptures is one of the first principles of our religion, as we are Christians; because our profession is built wholly upon the scriptures. We justly own no other rule of faith but the word of God, *Eph.* ii. 10. *We are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone.* And we are built upon no other foundation.

If we are Christians indeed, however we may use or value the writings of men, we make not them, not the very best of them, the rule of our faith, but the word of God alone.

But that rule ought to be thoroughly perused and digested, otherwise how good soever in itself, or how much soever we profess to take it for our rule, it is in fact no rule to us.

The word of God is the guide of our actions, *It is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths,* Ps. cxix. 105. Should we not then diligently study the word of God, that we may not wander from his commandments?

The word of God is the spring of all our hopes and comfort. There and there alone, we have the rich and immense treasure of the divine promises; and from thence alone, we can draw solid support and consolation, in a dark hour of trial and affliction.

In short, to all the valuable purposes of knowledge and life, the scriptures infinitely excel all human compositions whatever. The writings of men are but as the twinkling stars to that ocean of light, which is daily poured forth from the body of the Sun. Of all the means of knowledge and wisdom in the world, none are to be compared with the word of God. We should therefore have our eyes intent upon the light, for God hath given us this invaluable treasure, the holy scriptures, that we should make them our study.

It must be carefully observed, that it is not enough to be much in reading the scriptures, but while we read, we should employ all our attention to understand them. The scripture may be understood, but evidently not in every degree by every man; for as there

there are various sorts and degrees of knowledge in scripture, some perhaps, at present, beyond the reach of any man that ever yet was in the world; and as there are men in various capacities and degrees of learning, so it is manifest, all men cannot attain to the same degree of understanding in divine things; but there must necessarily be a great difference between the knowledge of one man and another in matters of faith and revelation.

This shews the absurdity of the popish scheme, which pretends to reduce the Christian faith in all its parts to a certain invariable standard, to which every man either explicitly or implicitly, either with or without understanding, must conform.

This also shews, that notwithstanding it is our duty to communicate knowledge to one another, it is repugnant to the nature and genius of Christianity to quarrel with one another, or to be displeased, because we have not all the same degree of understanding in matters of faith; because this, according to the present constitution of our minds, and of the revelation God hath given us, equally understood by all, is absolutely impracticable.

But although the Scriptures are not understood in every degree by every man, yet they may be understood by every man, so far as God requireth; that is, so far as he is capable of understanding them; for what a man can understand, he may understand, if he is not wanting to himself.

Further, those things in scripture, which are of the highest importance, and conducive to eternal life and salvation, are easy to be understood, and therefore how perplexed soever other things may be, about which men have differed, and which men by their difference, have more perplexed; the grand principles of faith in Christ, and obedience to the rules of the gospel are so evident, that any ordinary capacity may, with due care and attention, easily gain a complete knowledge of them.

The things chiefly to be understood in scripture, are PRINCIPLES, or the grounds and reasons of things and PRECEPTS, which are the rules of duty; now if we mistake either, we shall throw all into confusion, our way will be all mist and clouds, that which should be light, will be darkness, or which is the same, a false light, to mislead us: that which should be our joy, will be heaviness; that which should be our comfort, and inspire chearful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our spirits and clog our course.

Our path, which should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more, will be a gloomy, melancholy road, and we shall make our way with difficulty, because we want the true sense and knowledge of the ways and will of God, which is necessary to give life, comfort and vigour.

Frightful images will terrify our consciences, and fill us with groundless fear. God will be described in a monstrous light, and all the ravishing glories of his truth, wisdom and love,

love, which should powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid from our eyes.

The lustre of redeeming grace will be eclipsed; some parts of religion will be superstitiously magnified, while others will be undervalued.

Further, if for want of due attention to the sense of scripture we mistake, or fall into error, we ought to be sensible that religious error is of a far worse nature than any other; not only as it is an error in a matter of the greatest importance; but as it is of all others the most difficult to be corrected; for under the sacred name of religion it shelters and defends itself, and gains the character of truth, of important, necessary, awful truth, and the unwary think themselves bound in conscience and duty to maintain it with zeal; and then whoever endeavours to correct it, though in the spirit of meekness and peace, must do it at his peril.

Hence those grosser instances of persecution and bloodshed, which have indelibly stained the Christian name. Hence those wranglings, debates, heats and animosities, which have destroyed Christian societies.

These things are the fruits of men's taking their religious principles upon trust, and not founding them on the scriptures studied and understood by themselves. Such contempt and neglect of the word of God exposeth them to strong delusion, and such delusion, leads them to fight in the dark for they know not what.

Thus religion is corrupted, the corruption of it defended, and irreligion, and infidelity propagated, even by religious people themselves. So the sceptic, who is indifferent to any principles, when he finds absurdity, mixed with the Christian faith, taking the whole for a true account of Christianity, rejects the whole; for even common sense will not allow that revelation to be divine, which cannot in many of its parts be reconciled with the known perfections of God.

By these unhappy means, what numbers in our land have been drawn into Deism! and by these unhappy means (if the truth were known) religion appears but in a doubtful light to many, who seem to be strict professors of it; for where it is not received in the proper evidence, there cannot be a full and strong assent of faith; and no man can receive it in its proper evidence, who does not carefully endeavour to understand the scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the word of God, and pretend a great reverence for it, may possibly, at the last day, be ranked among the despisers of it; because although they have, perhaps, been much in reading it, they never set themselves in good earnest to understand it, and so in effect might as well not have read it at all; for their reading it is only from a superstitious opinion, as Turks, Jews, and Papists turn over the books in reputation among them, not from a love of truth, or a desire of understanding truth; not to open their eyes, and to give them a more

just and distinct view of the ways and dispensations of God; not to confirm and establish their minds in the faith of God, and of Christ: not for those purposes it is much feared are the scriptures read, but only in a customary, superstitious way, or at least very carelessly and superficially; and therefore there are so few professors of Christianity that grow in grace, who rise in spiritual strength, peace, love and joy; because there are so few that grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 2 *Pet.* iii. 18.

Many people presume they have attained the full knowledge of Christ, who are very short of that which is spiritual and saving. They have somewhere or other fixed the precise standard of divine knowledge, and either more or less than that standard is deemed impious and heritical. How can they set themselves to understand the scriptures, who in another way, as they think, have already gained the same sum and body of spiritual understanding? See *Romans* xv. 3. *Whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.* We have hope through that patience and comfort which is taught in the scriptures; but the grounds and reasons of that patience and comfort must be understood; otherwise we cannot establish in our minds a sure and solid hope.

Hence it is that the Christian hope, that faith and hope which overcometh the world, are so very rare; therefore so few rejoice in hope, because so few understand the scriptures, which are the ground and foundation of the true Christian hope.

Let it be remembered, that we shall have the *benefit* of the scriptures by studiously endeavouring to understand them, and then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

So far as we understand the word of truth, we shall be truly enlightened, our consciences will be rightly directed, and all our principles well established; we shall see its real value, and it will be proportionably esteemed; we shall taste its comforts, feel its power, be convinced of its divine original, and it will be both pleasant and precious to us. The more we understand of the scriptures, with the greater pleasure we shall see the righteousness, wisdom, and goodness of all divine dispensations, that all of them are adjusted and settled by the love of a Father, and calculated to promote our happiness. This will draw our hearts to God, and shew us the propriety of acquiescing with the constitutions of his grace.

If we are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, our faith will stand upon a sure bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious judgment of man; henceforth we shall be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, *Eph.* iv. 14. but shall by use have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Thus we shall grow up into Christ in all things, in knowledge, in faith, and

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in love. Thus we shall be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God, of truth, and of our neighbour. The knowledge we gain, whether it be more or less, being drawn from the fountain, will compose our spirits, and incline us neither to despise the weakness of those that know less, nor reject the instructions of those that may know more than ourselves. These weighty considerations should engage us to read the scriptures, with all possible care and diligence; and to study them with an upright desire of gaining their true sense and meaning.

We all know how much men are at varience concerning the true sense and import of scripture, one affirming that this, another that that, is the precise meaning. So it may well be expected to be in our present, weak and fallible state of existence; and so indeed God for wise and good reasons hath permitted it to be, not to give us occasion to censure, judge, and disparage one another, as is the too general practice of those who are called Christians; for this is expressly forbidden; but this variety of sentiments is permitted to teach us to practice charity towards one another, and should convince us that we ought not to resign our understanding or consciences to any man's judgment whatsoever.

Upon the whole, it is evident from the fallible state of human nature, the prevalence of human prejudices, the defects of human reason, and the proneness of mankind in general to sin and iniquity of every kind and degree, that a certain method of direction from the all-wise God is absolutely necessary to guide them into those paths that lead to the obedience of his will, and their own truest interest and happiness; it is also as evident, that the sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testament are entirely and fully conducive to those grand important purposes, being, as before observed, *given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

CHAP. X.

On the Authority and excellency of the Scripture, as founded on the express and frequent Assertions of Moses, the Prophets and Apostles.

WE have already hinted, that a divine revelation is perfectly consonant to the goodness and love of God, to the relation in which we stand to him, and the gracious purposes for which he has given us being.

We have likewise endeavoured to remove some objections against revelation in general, and to prove the expediency of it from the depraved state of human nature, and would now beg leave again to observe, that no books were ever more publicly, or more commonly known, being read and heard with the greatest reverence once a week, in both Jew and christian assemblies, for a very long course of

of time; the Old Testament, before the coming of our Lord, and the Old and New after his coming, to this very day. So that it is, in the nature of things, impossible that the holy scriptures should be adulterated; nor could any man, who was disposed to alter or corrupt them, promise himself success in an attempt, which must immediately be detected and confounded by thousands of copies every where dispersed, and constantly read before numerous assemblies in various languages of even more nations than ever composed the Roman empire in its largest extent.

Transcribers may indeed make literal mistakes, but, those are easily corrected by a variety of manuscripts; and translators may differ in giving the literal sense of some words and phrases; but not so as to render the subjects and substance of the scriptures, either obscure or uncertain; for you may take any translation in any language, or done by any party among christians, and you will find they all agree in the great doctrines of salvation, and the several law and duties injoined by the divine command; though they may not render the letter of the text in the same words, nor with the same propriety of expression.

The more perfect and exact in every point any translation is, the better it is; but it is very certain, that all things pertaining to the dispensations of God, his grace and promises, and our hopes and duty, have been preserved pure and entire in every translation, from the beginning to this day; and this is abundantly sufficient for our instruction, comfort, direction, and edification.

Persons in foreign commerce, who do not understand foreign languages, are obliged to carry it on by the help of translators; and if a letter in *Italian*, *German*, *Spaniſh*, or *French*, was put into the hands of twenty translators, it is much if every translation would not differ more or less in some expressions, and yet they might all agree with respect to the sense of the merchant; and this being all his correspondent wants to understand, he will not think it worth his pains to enter into points, or a critical propriety of phrases, which have no reference to his business.

Just so it is with respect to the translation of the Bible. In more than the space of an hundred years, learning may have received considerable improvements, and by that means some inaccuracies may be found in a translation, more than an hundred years old; but those who are disposed to believe the authenticity of scripture, may rest fully satisfied, that as our *Engliſh* translation is in itself, by far the most excellent book in our language, so it is a pure and plentiful fountain of divine knowledge, giving a true, clear and full account of the divine dispensations, and particularly of the gospel of our salvation, insomuch, that whoever studies the same, studies the only way to eternal happiness.

Before we proceed to the main business of this chapter, we shall endeavour to solve a difficulty that may naturally start upon this occasion; it is this, "How comes it to pass, that

"learned

" learned men differ so much about " the sense of scripture?"

We answer, They differ not so much about the literal sense, or translation of scripture, as about the construction which is put upon the literal sense.

For example, All are agreed, that these words, *Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you,* are rightly translated; but the question is, What is the meaning of them? The papist will tell you, they mean, that the bread in the Lord's supper, is realy turned into the body, soul and divinity of Christ. The protestant very justly denies the monstrous and idolatrous absurdity, and affirms, that the bread is only a figurative expression of Christ's sacrificed body.

Translators are generally pretty well agreed, but divines differ much about the sense of scripture, which by no means invalidates the same, as to the main end and drift.

Thus by demonstrating the reasonableness and expediency of revelation in general, by removing objections that are brought against it, and by shewing the sufficiency of the translation, which, thanks be to God, is in our hand; the way is prepared for advancing a few arguments to establish the authority and excellency of the scriptures, and to shew they were indeed given by inspiration of God, or that, in them, the holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit.

We have sufficient reason to believe, that we have in our hands the very books that were written by Moses, by the Prophets, and by the Apostles of Christ. Now that those books were given by inspiration of God, or that the persons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from Heaven, will appear from their own express and frequent assertions.

Moses and the Prophets always declared they spake in the name of the Lord, and delivered to the people what they received in commission from him.

The Apostles likewise assure us, that they were taught by Jesus Christ, the son of God; were endued with the spirit of God, and commissioned by him to preach the gospel to all nations; and we have the utmost reason to believe that they have told us the truth; for if they have not, they must be very wicked, designing men, who solemnly and publicly rested upon God, constitutions, laws, doctrines, and declarations, which they knew to be false and fictitious, the creatures of their own invention obtruded upon the world to serve some selfish, sinister purposes.

But for any thing we can see, they appear to be persons of the highest character for honour and probity. In the whole of their conduct we find the utmost integrity and disinterestedness, and in every part of their history and writings the utmost simplicity and impartiality.

We may carry this argument further, and set it in a still stronger light in the case of the Prophets; for if, when they declared that they spake in the name of God, and by a commission from him, they declared a

falshood, and if they knew it were a falshood, they were not only very wicked, but void of common sense. It is certain that the Prophets in a long series one after another, gained no advantage from speaking in the name of the Lord; but on the other hand, that they incurred scorn and contempt from the generality of their countrymen.

When they entered upon the ungrateful office, they renounced all worldly views, and were harrassed and persecuted in proportion to their fidelity in executing the commission.

Now, this is too much for any pious fraud to bear, even in the case of a single person, much more in that of a succession of men in several generations. An impostor like *Mahomet*, may carry his pretences very high, but he can never bear the furnace of persecution. That terrible scourge will either silence his false and arrogant claims, or force him to take up arms, if it is in his power, for his own vindication and security.

But the Prophets were poor men, who, without the least dependance upon worldly power or policy, opposed nothing but a divine commission to every unkind and rigorous treatment.

Now, there is nothing to be found in human nature, or in any state of things that can be supposed to exist, that can possibly account for this conduct, but either that they really had a divine commission, or else that they were deprived of their senses; but their writings prove they were men of good understanding, and of a sound and excellent judgment; therefore nothing remains, but that they really acted by a divine commission.

The force of this argument will be seen more evidently in the case of the Apostles. No history in the world had been better preserved than that of the New Testament: there we find that Jesus Christ had gathered, while he was upon earth, some hundreds of Disciples, who all made profession of faith to him, immediately after his death, declaring that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Particularly the Apostles, with several others, went about preaching the Gospel, first in Judea, then in all parts of the Roman empire, persuading them to believe in Christ, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful works related of him were true, and that they had a commission from Heaven to teach and propagate his religion every where, though they should every where meet with the most violent opposition, and the cruelest treatment.

Now they must have been fully convinced in their own minds, that their assertions were true; or if they knew that the Gospel, and their commission to preach it, was a forgery, we may conclude they were distracted, and had lost the use of reason and understanding; for admitting our blessed Lord never did or said any of these things, which the Apostles repeated, and that they had no instruction or commission from him to preach the Gospel; then we must suppose, they entered into a foolish

and

and frantic confederacy after this manner:

"Men and brethren, what that "seducer was, who lived among us "lately, and how justly he suffered "death for his vile imposture, we, "of all men living have most rea-"son to know; although others, "who were less intimately acquaint-"ed with him and his ways of de-"ceiving, might have some opini-"on of his worth and honesty; yet "we who were the daily compa-"nions of his conversation, saw no-"thing in him answerable to the "greatness of his pretensions; but "that his design was, by all the "boldest arts of craft and hypo-"crisy, to gain a name in the "world; and therefore let us enter "into a solemn agreement to pro-"pagate the belief of this notorious "cheat among mankind, and to "feign all manner of lies in con-"firmation of it; to aver that we "saw him restore eyes to the blind, "ears to the deaf, and life to the "dead; and though it be all false, "yet let us confidently report and "assert it to the very last drop of "our blood. Further, as after all "his great and glorious pretences of "being no less than the Son of God, "he was at last executed as a vile "melafactor, with every circum-"stance of shame and dishonour, "we must fix upon some story to "wipe off this disgrace; let us "therefore resolve to affirm, with "undaunted steadiness and the firm-"est resolution, that after he was "thus dishonourably crucified, the "third day he rose again, often con-"versed with us, in the same fa-"miliar way, as he had always "done before his execution; and that "after a while, we saw him ascend up "into Heaven: but then, we must "be sure to stand unalterably to this "bold falshood, and persevere to "death itself in the assertion; for "what absurdity is there in throwing "away our lives with no other pro-"spect than that of final perdition? "And why should any man think it "hard to suffer stripes, bonds, and "imprisonments, reproaches, dis-"honour, and death itself with this "view alone?"

This, or some such thing must be the ridiculous sense and absurd resolution of the Apostles, and first preachers of Christianity, upon a supposition that they knew and believed, that the gospel and their commission to preach it was a forgery.

In this case, a set of men in private and abject life, without any manner of worldly power and interest, in the certain prospect and expectation of all manner of opposition, of sacrificing all that is dear and valuable in life, of suffering all manner of indignities, tribulation, and cruelties, and of exposing themselves to all the terrors of death, must agree together to propagate throughout the whole world a system of falshood, knowing it to be such, directly contrary to the conviction of their own minds, and to all their interests both in this and a future world.

None but a company of madmen, seized with the most extravagant phrenzy, and void of all sense and reason,

reason, could possibly unite in such a design. Whereas, if we peruse their writings, we shall find that the Apostles were not only in the full possession of their reason and understanding, but endowed with knowledge and wisdom in a degree far beyond the most eminent philosophers, or masters of reason, then known in the world.

They had an amazing knowledge of God, and the perfections of the divine nature, they set the dispensations of his wisdom, and the grand designs of his love in the clearest and most amiable light; they well understood the whole system of the divine law as a perfect rule of practice, and fixed every branch of it upon a proper foundation; and upon principles self evident, or allowed, they have demonstrated and established the whole scheme of the gospel.

The Apostles were so far from being void of common sense, that they were in fact men of the best sense, of the most accurate and sublime knowledge, of the most excellent and divine spirit next to their Lord and Master, that the world was ever acquainted with; therefore their espousing and asserting the gospel with so much zeal could not proceed from any defect in their understanding.

There remains then but one other cause, to which it can possibly be assigned, which is, that they were amply convinced and fully persuaded of the truth of what they reported. If they were fully persuaded of the truth of what they reported, then it follows, that what they reported was certainly true.

They were fully satisfied that it was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the clearest evidence, and fullest satisfaction: for, observe, what they reported was not a matter of meer opinion, as in the case of superstition, nor a warm suggestion, or secret impulse upon their minds, as in the case of enthusiasm, but a plain matter of fact. *We cannot*, say they, *but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard*, Acts iv. 10.

They were not things which they conceived or fancied, but which all of them, with great multitudes of people, had often and openly, for the space of three or four years together, seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears; and that they were not mistaken or deceived; they were so fully satisfied, that they ventured all that they had in the world, and even life itself, upon the truth of what they had heard and seen; consequently their assurance must be to the highest and fullest degree of satisfaction, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty.

However some in the present day may cavil and object, it is certain the Apostles, who were the familiar companions of our blessed Lord, had not the least scruple or difficulty concerning any thing related in the gospel.

They were fully convinced, perfectly assured they saw Christ upon earth, that they conversed with him, that they heard the gracious words which

which proceeded from his mouth, that they saw him work miracles, that they saw him crucified and dead, that they saw him alive again in a few days, that they heard him give them a commission to preach the gospel to all nations, and promise them success; that they actually saw him ascend up to Heaven; that the Holy Ghost fell upon them on the day of Pentecost, and that by his influence, they actually felt themselves endowed with a new and miraculous power, which accompanied them, during the course of their ministry; and to their being fully persuaded of the truth of these things, and to no other possible cause can we assign their study and zealous endeavours to publish and spread the gospel.

Add to all this, that the Apostles were amazingly successful in preaching the gospel, amidst all the opposition with which they met, during the course of their ministry.

These men in private and low life, these defenceless men, quite destitute of all wordly power and interest, only by the force of truth, the truth of the gospel, which they preached, and the power which they received from their master, after he went to Heaven, encountered the fury of a bigotted and enraged multitude, and the most inveterate prejudices. All these difficulties they encountered, and surmounted them all.

Their doctrine had a most amazing effect and influence on the minds of multitudes, who by the power of God, at their preaching, were daily added to the church.

These considerations, weighed together in an impartial ballance, will sufficiently prove the authenticity of the Apostles mission and doctrine, that they received their commission and instruction from *Jesus* the eternal Son of God; and upon the foot of this argument alone, the sincere believer may be fully convinced that the Apostles were inspired by the Spirit of God, and that they have in their writings infallibly delivered the truth, in all things pertaining to the Christian faith and doctrine.

If *Jesus Christ* came from the right hand of his Father to explain to us the divine mind and will; if his Apostles were taught by him, and after his ascension received the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a most miraculous manner, enabling them to perform wonders in confirmation of the doctrine they delivered; it certainly follows, that the books of *Moses*, and of the Prophets, are undoubtedly the word of God; and that the sacred history may be depended on as a true account of things: for those books are not only asserted by our Lord, and his Apostles in general, to be the word of God, given by inspiration, and a true rule of knowledge, faith and doctrine; but particular passages are frequently produced in proof or confirmation of the doctrine they taught, and almost every single part of the history, from the beginning to the end, as of *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, the *Deluge*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Abraham*, the *Israelites*, and their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, and settlement in

the land of *Canaan*, and all the surprising events in their history, are referred to as true and authentic.

What Jesus Christ and his Apostles have written and taught in the books of the Old and New Testament, is certainly the truth, as they received it from God. If so, then the scriptures of the Old Testament are also given by inspiration, and are a sacred repository of divine knowledge, of undoubted credit and veracity; for our Lord and his Apostles have represented and established them as such.

Therefore the frequent and express assertions of *Moſes*, the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, taken in connection with their proper circumstances, is a proof of the truth of revelation as it stands in the scriptures.

Thus we have endeavoured to deduce the authority and excellence of the scriptures, as contained in the Holy Bible, and comprizing the books of the Old and New Testament, from the express, frequent and concurring declarations of their respective writers, *viz. Moſes*, the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, and would subjoin this single remark for the comfort and edification of the pious christian.

"As you find upon the strictest examination, an entire uniformity of doctrine, opinion and sentiment, concerning the great things of God in all the sacred writings, that they all represent the divine nature in the same light. In short, as they all tend absolutely to lead us to the covenant of grace and the sufferings and atonement of Jesus Christ for life and salvation; let us not be wavering in our opinion, but stedfastly maintain the faith once delivered to the Saints, ever remembering that He is faithful, who hath promised, and who has declared, that *Heaven and earth may paſs away, but not one jot or tittle of his word ſhall paſs away.*"

CHAP. XI.

On the internal Worth and Excellency of the Scriptures, as containing the beſt Principles of Knowledge, Holineſs and Comfort.

THE arguments we have already advanced, are taken from the external evidence, that the scriptures are the word of God: we now proceed to consider their internal worth and excellency, which more fully and clearly demonstrates their divine original, and falls in with the second part of our design, which was to state the use and importance of the holy scriptures.

Considering the sacred writings as a gift and blessing from God, the Father of all light, and fountain of all good, for our improvement in knowledge and holiness, in order to our being advanced to eternal glory and happiness, we may in general conclude, that the scriptures are in worth and usefulness fully proportionable to the wisdom and goodness of the donor, and to the noble and beneficent end for which they are intended. They are a glorious display of heavenly light, irradiating the

the darkness of the world, which otherwise would have been involved in the blackest night of ignorance.

Let it be observed to the honour of the Bible, that it is the book, which under the divine Providence, has preserved in the world the knowledge of the only true God, which otherwise must have been lost and extinguished; for when God in his infinite wisdom was pleased to call *Abraham*, and separate his family to the purposes of revelation: idolatry, even in those early days, not long after the flood, was so far spread, that some of *Abraham's* family were idolaters, and served other gods.

So far indeed did the corruption of religion prevail, that all nations, losing the true idea of the great and glorious Creator of Heaven and earth, even JEHOVAH, the only true God; fell into the grossest idolatry and superstition, together with every abominable vice, except the nation of the Jews, who enjoyed the word and revelation of God; and it was that very word and revelation at the time our Saviour came into the world, which enlightened the Gentiles, and so generally reduced them to the worship and obedience of the great Lord of the universe.

What knowledge of the living God, what detestation of idol worship, what belief of a future state of rewards and punishment; *Mahomet* has propagated in the world, he received partly from *Jews*, and partly from *Christians*, who had learned those things from revelation, though with much confusion, and a large mixture of fiction and falshood. Is any part of the Christian world sunk into superstition and idolatry? It is because they have shut up the scriptures, forbidden the free use of them, and commanded the people under pain of damnation to follow other guides. Is any part of the Christian world reformed from the gross errors, and monstrous corruptions of popery? it is because they have asserted the authority of the scriptures, resumed the use of them, and opened them again to free and common perusal.

Nay, farther. Is the Deist, or the man, who in a Christian land denies or disparages revelation, acquainted with the first cause, and fountain of all being, power, life and happiness, the universal sovereign? has he a clear idea of the duties which we owe to our Maker, and to one another? it is because he has derived his light from this resplendant Sun, which he unnaturally, ungratefully, and weakly endeavours to extinguish.

Weak and indeed are his endeavours, because this glorious Sun of Gospel-light shall, by the Providence of God, be preserved and shine with a glorious lustre, as long as the Sun in the firmament.

Under God, the scriptures must be owned, the instrumental cause of all the true religion that is to be found in the world, which for any thing we know, would have been totally lost among the nations; and it shall be established more and more; it shall shine forth more and more: it shall be honoured more and more, in the truth

truth of its doctrines, in the wisdom of its precepts, in the accomplishment of its predictions and promises, and in the appearing of our Lord at the last day to receive in his joy all that know and obey the gospel of his grace. It shall be established; it shall shine; it shall be honoured, when those, who now despise and disparage it, shall be confounded for ever.

Thus much may be truly said of the usefulness of scripture in general, which gives it infinitely the preference to all books of meer human composure, as it has been the means of preserving in the world the grand principles of religion, the knowledge of the being and perfections of God, and of the true spiritual worship, which alone pleaseth him, and ennobles, purifies and comforts our souls; and just in proportion as the Bible is received, esteemed and diligently studied, true religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flourish.

On the other hand, in proportion as the scriptures are unknown, neglected, abused and perverted; ignorance, idolatry, irreligion, error, superstition and imorality, have and will spread their gloom, and more or less infect nations and particular persons.

The scriptures contain principles, which must be allowed to be of a superior and excellent kind. The best principles of knowledge, holiness and comfort.

In those sacred writings we find the best principles of knowledge. Here the mind expatiates in a boundless field of Heavenly light, and clearly views the prospects of truth, where the eye of meer nature could never have penetrated. Here you see the being of God asserted, his nature and perfections, his glorious majesty and universal sovereignty described, with the justest propriety of sentiment, and the utmost elegance of language.

There you read, *That the everlasting God, the Lord and poſſeſſor of all wiſdom and power made the earth, and created man upon it; that he ſtretched out the Heavens, and commanded all their hoſts.*

He meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and the Heavens with a ſpan. He comprehends the duſt of the earth in a meaſure, and weighed the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a ballance. He toucheth the mountains, and they ſmoke; he looks upon the earth, and it trembles.

Behold the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the earth. He takes up the iſles as a very little thing. All nations are before him as nothing; and they are counted to him as leſs than nothing, and vanity.

The whole univerſe reſts wholly upon his arm, and is intirely ſubject to the diſpoſal of his will. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who has created theſe things? he calls them by name, by the greatneſs of his might: for, as he is ſtronger in power, not one of them fails. In underſtanding he is infinite; he is mighty in wiſdom, wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working.

He fills Heaven and earth, nor can any

any one hide himself in secret places from his all-piercing eye. The earth is full of his glory and riches; and his Providence is perpetually exercised about all and every one of his creatures.

All power belongs to him; he can help, and cast down; he can save and destroy; and nothing is too hard for the Lord.

God is love; the Lord is good, and doth good; he is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. He is daily loading us with benefits.

The righteous he will bless; to them he will give grace and glory; and even to the wicked, the Lord is plenteous and rich in mercy. He is a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. He is glorious in holiness, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

Now this God, so great and glorious, is our God and Maker, our Father, Shepherd and Friend.

This is the doctrine of scripture, and a sentence or two in this holy book will give you much clearer conceptions of God, than all the volumes of philosophy, written by strangers to revelation. Here you are taught the various dispensations of divine wisdom and goodness, from the beginning of the world to this day, and even to the end of time.

Here you see the excellent scheme which he has formed for the instruction, reformation and happiness of mankind; and we read with pleasure the numerous instances of favours to the righteous; and with dread the terrors of his vengeance to the wicked.

Here we find a two-fold covenant; of works which threatens death to every transgression; of grace which grants pardon and redemption to every believer, and promises all needful supplies to the humble and sincere.

Here we learn how God created a kingdom among the nations, or a peculiar congregation, to prevent the universal corruption of the world, and like a star in the firmament, to diffuse the light of divine knowledge throughout the darkness of the earth.

At length we see the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, appear to take away sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, or salvation, to illustrate the grace of God, and give the plainest explination of his will and duty, to shew the future world in the clearest and most awful view, and to appoint the most powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

In his gospel we see the dead, small and great, restored to life, appearing before his judgment seat, to receive a sentence according to what they have done in the body. There he has opened the glories of Heaven to our sight, and shewn to our faith the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, the assured consequence of a patient continuance in well-doing; he has also uncovered the bottomless pit, the blackness of darkness for ever, which will be

the terrible portion of all impenitent workers of iniquity.

In the scriptures the condition of the church to the end of the world is described, and we see the present state of things correspondent with prophetic descriptions.

It would exceed the bounds of our present design to mention the several heads of instruction and knowledge with which the word of God abounds; we shall therefore observe but one more, and that is, the design of our present existence in this world, which is there represented in a manner agreeable to the appearance of things, and the wisdom and goodness of God, not to be for enjoyment, but for trial, not to gain temporal pleasures or possessions, but to discipline our souls, and to prepare them for immortal glory and honour.

In particular, the many afflictions incident to our frailty, are set in a true and encouraging light, as the discipline and correction of our heavenly father; not for our destruction, but for our improvement in holiness, to purify our spirits from sensuality, to draw our regard to things heavenly and eternal, to exercise our faith, hope, patience, and every virtue, which is our real excellency, and best qualification for everlasting happiness.

This is a brief and very imperfect specimen of scripture doctrine, which, even in this cursory view, assisted by a little serious reflection, must, to an impartial judgment, moderately acquainted with what the wisest of Pagans have taught, appear infinitely superior to the darkness and uncertainty of meer human knowledge and wisdom.

In the scripture you will find the best principles of holiness, or of that state of mind, whereby we are habitually devoted to God and truth; For there we are shewn the nature and design of living, in a manner greatly superior to what we could have desired from our own reason and reflection.

There we read, that we were formed in the image of God, inspired with understanding, raised vastly in our faculties, above the rest of the creation, and made for ends proportionably grand and noble; not for the mean purposes of time and sense, but for God; for his honour and favour, to shew forth his praise, and for ever enjoy his goodness. Every obligation resulting from this important consideration, even the gracious and excellent purposes of our being, is with the greatest propriety and force urged upon us.

In every page of the holy scriptures, the love of God smiles upon us with an attractive and endearing aspect, to draw our affections to him, and to give a constancy and steadiness to our obedience in the midst of so many, and so strong temptations, when we know the necessity of trials, troubles and affliction of every kind, in this vale of tears, in order to prepare us for a residence in the heavenly mansions, where sorrow shall be no more, where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and endless ages shall be spent in the uninterrupted fruition of such blessings, as eye hath not seen, nor

ear

ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

In the scripture we have the divine displeasure against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, set upon its true foundation; the odious and pernicious nature of sin, which is in itself false and mischievous, the only radical evil in the universe, and that which alone can deprive us of happiness, and subject us to misery.

In the word of God, his favour to pious persons is also set upon its proper foundation; the amiable and excellent nature of true holiness, which in itself is true and salutary, the greatest preparative for future glory, is represented in the most lively and engaging colours.

Here we are kindly encouraged by the divine grace, to think of our ways, and by true repentance, to turn, from whatever is repugnant to the obedience of God.

Here we are directed frequently to examine our hearts, to banish thence every corrupt principle, and to keep the spring of action within us, pure from any disorderly thought and inclination; to guard our spirits with a watchful eye, from every impure motion and suggestion; to be vigilent against every temptation and assault of the grand enemy of souls, that we may keep ourselves undefiled in the good ways of God.

Here we are instructed in the most perfect and reasonable sobriety, temperance and self-denial, and warned of the danger of every sensual snare and allurement.

Here this perishing body, with whatever can delight and adorn it; here this present world, with whatever in it that can engage our affections and esteem, are fully exposed to the judgment and censure of reason, and manifestly shewn to be emptiness and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal spirits; and therefore unfit to be pursued at the expence of our present integrity, or future felicity.

In the sacred writings we find a rich magazine of all proper means for the sanctification of our souls, and our most successful advances in the love of God.

Here we see that the divine power and spirit are ready by mighty aids to assist, enlighten and strengthen our spirits, and incline our hearts towards God's commandments; here we are directed every day, and at all times to seek unto God, by fervent prayer, for his guidance and protection; and are graciously assured that we shall not seek his face in vain.

In the holy scriptures we are taught the ordinances of religion, both public and private, in the conscientious use of which we shall grow into perfect men in *Christ Jesus*; particularly we are commanded to set apart a competent portion of our time every day, and to keep the sabbath holy every week; that by serious meditation upon God's word, and pouring out our hearts before him in prayer and thanksgiving, we may renew our spiritual strength; be more and more confirmed

firmed in the habits of holiness, and find ourselves still advancing nearer to heavenly perfection.

This sketch of the principles of holiness, to be derived from the scriptures, clearly prove their divine original and excellence, as it sets them vastly above any thing human wisdom can discover or devise.

In the scriptures we also find the best principles of comfort and refreshment to the soul. How needful are such principles in a scene of afflictions, sin and weakness! In general, under how many amiable characters; under how many sweet encouragements we are invited to trust in the Almighty and eternal God; to look unto him, and make his name, his goodness and power, our refuge in every want, danger, difficulty and conflict? Being assured that he careth for us while we hope in him; and that he will never leave us nor forsake us! We are encouraged to hold out unto the end; persuaded, that however he may permit our sufferings and griefs, he can never forget us, and will make all things how bitter soever, work together for our good, we are disposed to glorify God amidst all the dispensations of his wise Providence.

Heaven is at all times open to our complaints and supplications; and the throne of God, which is a throne of grace, is easy of access, to the breathings and desires of the penitent believing soul.

Are we loaded with a sense of guilt? See the blood of *Jesus!* the security and seal of our pardon. Are we humbled under a sense of our unworthiness? Hear the voice of divine grace, proclaiming us the children of God! a dignity far superior to all the honours of this vain and transitory state.

Look into the scripture; view the unsearchable riches of Christ! behold the love of our God and Redeemer! of his own gracious will, and meer good pleasure, he has begotten us; he is become our father; he has *justified us freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*; he had conferred upon us the honour of his children; he has made us welcome to all the blessings of his covenant, and to all the glories of his kingdom.

Fearful and dejected soul! look into the glorious gospel, and see thy God shining in all the beams of free and heavenly grace. Be of good comfort: thy sins are forgiven; the interest in the covenant is sure; the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ is thy God and father; and thou art welcome to all the treasures of his mercy and goodness. Only rejoice in his grace and live agreeably to it in all faith, purity, love and goodness.

Are you afraid your own weakness and surrounding temptations should draw your regard from God, pervert your mind, and cause you to fall short of salvation? Fear not thou worm *Jacob*; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; *I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness, or salvation.*

Only cleave unto God by faith in Christ, with purpose of heart; and he

he who has begun a good work, will certainly perfect it unto the day of Christ. You shall be more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.

Doth the world frown, and pour its sorrows into your breast? look to the heavenly world, the glory that shall be revealed in the Saints. That is your home and country; that is your portion and inheritance; and if you regard it as such, you will rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and be raised far above the cares and fears of this low and transitory state.

Such strong consolations the holy scriptures supply, and therefore their author is undoubtedly the God of all consolations; for no wisdom of man could ever possibly have opened to us such a fountain of joy, comfort and refreshment.

Thus we see the scriptures contain, beyond all dispute, the best principles of knowledge, of holiness and comfort.

It is no less evident that they deliver the best precepts for directing all our actions, which may be reduced to three heads; our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves.

We are taught to worship God with a sincere admiration of his glory and perfections, with profound reverence of his greatness, with humble adoration of his sovereignty, with the highest love and esteem for his excellency and amiableness, with joy and gratitude for his goodness, and with a heart truly devoted to his honour, and determined for his obedience.

To our neighbour, we are directed to perform not only justice, truth and equity, but also unfeigned charity, the most extensive kindness and benevolence.

To ourselves, we owe self-preservation and self-government; and the scriptures admonish us to take the wisest care of our being, by cultivating and guarding our minds, and by mortifying all inordinate affections and passions.

In short, all that our reason can find in the law or religion of nature, is without the least omission, transcribed into revelation, and moreover, the wisdom of God has not only perfected and supplied our deficiencies, but hath discovered to us the riches of goodness, knowledge and power, infinitely beyond what our natural faculties could ever have attained.

Thus we are furnished both with the most perfect rules of obedience, and also with the most powerful motives to the observance of them.

This, as already observed, it is further evident, that the sacred writings of the Old and New Testament, are a storehouse of the most sacred and useful knowledge admirably adapted to the improvement of our minds in faith and holiness, beyond all competition and objection.

But as those only can object against them, who never read them, or never with serious minds; for you would know what the scriptures are, if you would know whether they are of

God, read them, study them, meditate upon them, and you cannot fail of being convinced of their excellency and divine original.

Such being the intrinsic excellency of the scriptures, has centered into our Lord's thoughts, and was the object of his care in his last moments, even amidst the pains and agonies of death. Its being the subject of his thoughts at a time, when his thoughts turned upon nothing but what were infinitely momentous; his being concerned upon the cross, that no point of scripture should want its full evidence or establishment, is a demonstration of the great worth and superior excellency of scripture.

Under all his preceding sufferings, which must be exceedingly bitter, he never dropped the least expression of the sorrow and anguish he felt, but endured it with silence of the most perfect meekness and patience.

We must therefore conclude, he would not have opened his mouth to signify his grievous distress, when on the cross, [*My God! My God! Why haſt thou forſaken me!*] had it not been for the sake of expressing his trust in God; nor would he have mentioned his thirst, but from a regard to divine revelation, and its accomplishment.

Our Lord has all along, from first to last, shewn the highest respect to the word of God. With this sword did he combat and conquer Satan, when tempted by him in the wilderness.

He always, in the course of his ministry, appeals to it as the standard of religious truth, revealing the will of God, and explaining his dispensations: he declares he came not to destroy so much as one tittle of the law or the Prophets, but to complete, vindicate, or illustrate them: assuring us, that their original was divine, their honour shall be perpetual, and that, *till Heaven and earth paſs away*, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, *not one jot ſhall paſs*, or perish from the law of revelation *till all be fulfilled*.

Our blessed Lord directs the Jews to search the scriptures, as doctrines of eternal life were contained in them, and as they testified of him.

As his sufferings drew nearer, he frequently takes notice of the fulfilment of the scriptures in the several steps and events which led to them. *Matt.* xxvi. 34. *All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night; for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep of the flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad*; and again, in the 53d and 54th verses of the same chapter, *Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve legions of Angels. But how then ſhall the ſcripture be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?*

Thus we find, that the scripture might be fulfilled in his sufferings, he would not suffer his Disciples to rescue him out of the hands of those who came to seize him.

When upon the cross, he is not diverted from the same important purpose, though in the midst of the most exquisite torments, and labouring under a violent drought.

Regard

Regard to the scripture prevailed in his mind, more than the sense of the greatest pain and anguish; and not relieve his thirst, *but that the scripture might be fulfilled*, he cried out, *I thirst*.

Thus our crucified Lord has set the seal of his blood to the divine authority, excellency and certainty of the holy scriptures. He came into the world; he laid down his life to accomplish what was fore-ordained, and foretold in the scriptures.

Now this evidently implies, that our Lord knew, and was persuaded, that the scriptures are of divine original, are the word of God, and do declare to us the mind and will of God; consequently they contain discoveries and instructions of the highest and most excellent nature; and that all things they predict, must, and most certainly will, be accomplished.

It seems at first view but an inconsiderable circumstance, that the scriptures intimate, they would give the *Messiah*, in his thirst, vinegar to drink. This seems to be a fact of no great moment; nor do we know that it stood in connection with any thing of consequence, and yet our Lord would not overlook it; he took care should be punctually fulfilled.

How much more then may we persuade ourselves, that the great promises, and all the predictions relating to matters of vast importance, shall be accomplished?

The apparent insignificancy of vinegar, being offered to Christ on the cross, adds great force to the argument. If a point, seemingly so minute, was carefully attended to, and punctually discharged, when the redeemer was in extremity of pain and torture, how much more, now that he is entered into his joy, now that he is possessed of the highest felicity and glory; now that he is invested with the most extensive power and dominion? how much more will he now make good all that is declared by the ancient Prophets in the Old Testament; and all that he himself hath foretold and promised in the New, relating to the things of infinite moment? exceeding great and precious promises are given us of the divine presence, blessing and protection, through this world, which every upright man may be assured will be made good.

How many glorious predictions have our Lord and his Apostles delivered concerning the world that is to come?---*that he will raise us up again at the last day;* and we shall certainly be raised out of our graves, and restored to a life quite different from the present---*that he will come in great glory to judge the world*; and most assuredly he will so come, and we shall every one of us stand before his tribunal, to give an account of ourselves.

To his faithful servants he hath *promised eternal life*; and to all such, most surely, he will give eternal life.

It is frequently foretold that *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*, will be the dreadful lot of the impenitently wicked; and doubtless everlasting destruction will be the lot of such.

Most

Most clearly hath he made known his everlasting kingdom of glory, where his sincere followers-shall partake of his glory and felicity, and we may firmly believe and hope, that this will be our happy condition, if we make it our present care to be his sincere followers.

Thus has our beneficent Redeemer afforded us in his last moments, a most solid ground of hope towards God, and directed us absolutely to depend upon all that the scriptures reveal concerning our salvation.

But let us consider the stile and manner of the sacred writings, from which may likewise be derived another argument in proof of their divine authority. There is a peculiar majesty as well as genuine simplicity discernable in the productions of the inspired penman, nay, so impartial are they, that they hide not their own failings, nor those of any concerning whom they write: thus *Moſes* recorded not only *Noah's* drunkenness, and *Lot's* incest, but his own rash anger and unbelief; thus *David* registered in the 51st psalm, his own murder and adultery: *Jeremiah* relates his own unbecoming fears, discontent and murmurings, *Jer.* xx. 7, 8.

The writers of the New Testament conceal not the infirmities and defects, nor even the gross miscarriages of themselves and their brethren; as their pusillanimous desertion of their blessed Lord and Master at his passion; the unbelief of *Thomas*, the ambition of *John* and *James* the sons of *Zebedee*, and *Peter's* denial of Christ, a crime greatly aggravated by perjury.

From the free, open, and circumstantial manner, in which the scriptures treat on different subjects, it is evident they are not the writings of men, and clear beyond a demonstration, that no wordly and sinister design is carried on in them, but that their sole end and view are the glory of God and the salvation of mankind; in short, the impartiality and sincerity of the sacred penmen is an irrefragable argument of the truth of their writings.

The majesty and simplicity which run through the scriptures call likewise for our attention and regard. An ancient father thus speaks of the stile and subjects of the Bible, *The language of divine wiſdom in the ſcriptures is plain, but the ſenſe is ſublime and heavenly: whereas on the contrary, the language of Heathen writers is lofty and bombaſt, but the ſubjects mean and unintelligible.* The great *Boyle*, treating on this subject, declares, *that it fits not the majeſty of God, whoſe book this is* [*meaning the Bible*] *to obſerve the human laws of method, and niceneſs of art; inſpired writings muſt not be like thoſe of men.* Their singular grace is, that they are not artificial and studied; but simple, plain, and easy, as an artificial method is below the majesty of the Spirit that dictated them, and would greatly detract from their intrinsic worth and merit.

The oftener we look into the sacred volume, the more we shall be convinced that the pens of the writers

ters were wholly guided and directed by a divine hand; for on a minute observation of any of the books either doctrinal or historical, it will appear that the mode of expression is in a great measure peculiar to itself.

To these remarks may be added, that it is the firm belief and opinion of many learned and pious men, that the very words and phrases of scripture were dictated by the divine Spirit, and under the particular guiddance and direction of the Holy Ghost.

But there are some divines of a contrary opinion, who positively assert, that the stile and language of scripture were not dictated by the Holy Ghost, but the matter only. Among other arguments to prove, that the words were not dictated by the Spirit, they argue, that Christ and his Apostles quote places from the Old Testament, as they are translated in the *Septuagint*; and infer from thence, that as they would have cited the passages in the original phrases, if these had been from divine inspiration, it is evident they are not so, because the Apostles use words and terms very different from those in the Hebrew.

In answer to this we beg leave to observe, that though the Apostles thought fit to make use of the *Septuagint* version, which is but a paraphrase in many places on the original text; yet it by no means follows from hence, that the very words of the original were not dictated by the Holy Ghost.

Neither our blessed Lord, nor the Evangelists and Apostles do hereby declare, that the Hebrew text was not inspired, and that even as to the phrase and words; all therefore that we can gather from their using the Greek translation is, that they found it convenient at that time (for reasons which will be assigned hereafter) to quote some places as they are rendered by those translators, and not exactly according to the original.

But all this doth not necessarily imply, much less prove, that the penmen of the Old Testament were not assisted by the Spirit, in the very words which they used.

The contrary opinion is grounded on a very good reason; for the sacred writings, being of a more excellent nature, than all others in the world, it was meet that they should be characterized by the peculiarity of their stile.

Those who will not grant this, acknowledge that their writings, in one respect at least, and that no inconsiderable one, are no better than the writings of other men, which cannot but be deemed a great disparagement of the holy Bible.

Christ promised his Disciples, that when they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake, *it ſhould be given them, what they ſhould ſpeak:* (for as he adds) *it is not they that ſpeak, but the Spirit of the Father that ſpeaketh in them*, Matt. x. 19, 20. And is it not most reasonable to think, that the same Spirit taught the writers of the Old and New Testament, *what they ſhould ſpeak*, and commit to writing, and furnished *them* with words to that purpose?

The propriety of this opinion will appear, if it is considered, that this was a book intended to last throughout all generations in the church; designed for the use of the faithful, and for the confutation of the adversaries to the end of the world, and that being to be produced upon all occasions, it was necessary that it should be of an extraordinary composition: and that every word should be expressly from the direction of the holy Spirit of God.

St. *Peter* assures us, that the writers of the Old Testament *ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, 1 Pet. i. 21. That speaking, and consequently their writing (because they must necessarily correspond) was by the special influence of the infallible Spirit; therefore their very words were dictated and directed by the same Spirit.

The great Apostles of the Gentiles declares indefinitively and absolutely, without the least degree of restriction that *all ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God:* now if all scripture be by divine inspiration; it follows that the very words of it are, for the words are certainly an essential part and branch of it; therefore if we grant that the whole is by inspiration, we must necessarily grant likewise, that the parts of it are; for the parts constitute the whole.

Hence we may be exempted from presumption, in asserting, that every word in the sacred scripture is indited by the Spirit of God, and that there is nothing wanting, nothing superfluous in the stile and phraseology.

But further, that the whole of our design in treating upon this subject may be understood, we observe, that by what has already been said, we would not intimate, that the sacred penmen were so tied up by the Spirit, that they could not, or did not use their own natural understanding, or acquired knowledge.

Though the words be dictated by the Spirit, the penmen might write according to the improvements they had made in speech. We do not, by what we have said, exclude the peculiar elegance and strain of the writers, or their availing themselves of the advantages of their education, or their conforming to the dialect of their country.

Iſaiah, being a courtier, and a person of rank, has a neat and elegant stile, but yet varies the phrase according to the subject; but in the general he is lofty and elegant, his stile being raised by his education, which was suitable to his noble extraction, for he was of the blood royal.

Jeremiah, and *Amos*, being used to the country, are plain and comely in their language: the latter especially discovers his condition and rank in life in his simple, rural strain.

In like manner in the New Testament, St. *Luke*, who had improved himself by art and study, is very particular in preserving the Greek elegance, and avoiding all improper and exotic terms, both in the gospel and his history of the acts of the Apostles.

Indeed the stile of the sacred penmen

men is very different, and that difference is an excellency in this book of God: and upon the whole we conclude, that the stile, words, and composition of the sacred writings, are such as ought to be reckoned divine; for the Bible has this peculiarity, above all other books, that every thing appertaining to it is divine.

CHAP. XII.

On the external Teſtimony of Scriptures, as founded on Tradition, and the Confirmation of Enemies and Strangers, with Anſwers to divers Objections.

WE have already taken notice of the testimony given by God to the sacred scriptures, in the wonderful preservation of them thro' all ages, since they were first written.

We have likewise observed the marvellous success which attended the doctrines contained in these writings, which have prevailed against the power of men and devils, and to this very day are maintained and upheld, notwithstanding the attempts of both to root them out of the world; eternal testimony shall therefore be the subject of our present enquiry.

By *external teſtimony* we mean no other than this; that scripture is attested by universal tradition; and this tradition is both of Jews and Christians. From the joint attestations of these witnesses, we shall endeavour to render it evident, that these books, which we now have, are the true copies of the originals; that the same books and authors are faithfully delivered down to us, which were first of all delivered to the Jews, and to the primitive Christians; and that there is nothing in these writings, as we now have them, that is falsified or corrupted.

With respect to the books of the Old Testament, we are acquainted by the ancient church of the Jews, whose testimony is very authentic, that these were the only writings that were universally agreed by them to be supernaturally inspired. And they further inform us, that these books which were written by different persons were first compiled and collected into one body, or volume, by *Ezra*, and the assemblies of doctors, convened for that purpose, and consequently that the canon of sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testament (as it is at this time) was not constituted till *Ezra's* days by the *Great Synagogue*.

Upon his return from the Babylonish captivity, he undertook this good work; he gathered together all those dispersed books, which having reviewed, he publicly owned, and solemnly vouched the authority of every one of them, that the church for the future might not doubt of their being authentic and true.

After he had caused the books to be fairly transcribed, he arranged them in that order in which they are now placed; so that he may be deemed the composer of the Old Testament into the model in which we now behold it.

Most

Most of the learned Jews assert, that from his revising the books, arose what they call the *Keri* and the *Chetib*; that is, where the copies disagreed, or where two readings were probable, they were made *Variæ Lectiones*, or various readings, the one was put into the margin, and called *Keri*, the other in the text, and called *Chetib*.

This was one way to keep the Bible entire and uncorrupted: and by the favour of divine Providence, it has been translated so to us; so that we may from hence be assured that we have in our hands the same Hebrew text, which was at first given by God to his people.

But some have averred, that the old Testament was burnt at the same time that the temple was; and that *Ezra*, after the captivity, dictated and wrote it over again; that though there was some recovery of the law, yet the original book being lost, it cannot but be imagined there are many errors in that which we have at present.

To this answer; either the passage in 2 *Esdras* xiv. 21, 23, 24, on which that affirmation is grounded, speaks of some other book distinct from that of the Mosaic law, or is to be reckoned as fabulous and suppositious; and so no credit is to be given to it: for in *Nehemiah* vii. 2, 3. there is mention of *the book of the law being brought before the congregation and its being read before the men and women*; but not a syllable of the circumstance mentioned in *Esdras* is here to be found. Nay, it is implied, that the book of the law was still the same; for there is a particular account of what the Chaldeans destroyed and burnt, and carried away, at the taking of Jerusalem; but there is not a word relative to these holy books, which would most certainly have been taken notice of, being of such inestimable value.

Moreover, if we should suppose the law was burnt in the temple, yet there were many copies of it among the Jews, which without doubt were preserved; we have no reason therefore to suspect that the Hebrew original of the Old Testement is corrupted.

Some indeed of the ancient fathers as well as some learned men of later date, have asserted that the Hebrew is corrupted; but *Jerom* and *Auguſtine* removed that suspicion, by declaring that the Jews had never adulterated the Hebrew text, and praising them for their faithfulness in preserving the Bible pure and uncorrupt.

As to some of the moderns, who have asserted that the Hebrew copies are erroneous, their motives are very easily discernable. The papists affirm the Hebrew text is corrupted, and also that of the Septuagint; several of that faith have written against the purity of the Hebrew copies, and laboured to prove them corrupt.

One *(Morinus)* hath shewn himself more zealous than the rest in this point, and he frankly confesseth, that his main design in it was, to baffle the protestants, who make the scriptures the rule of their faith

and

and manners. He reasons in this manner; if the originals of the Bible be lost, and the transcripts defective and erroneous, how can the Bible be a certain rule? What will become then of the religion of the Protestants, who found it solely on scripture; This being uncertain that of consequence must be the same; wherefore the best and only way is, to have recourse to tradition, and to the church; these are the only rules by which we are to regulate our faith and practice.

This is evidently the aim and design of the Romish writers, who endeavour to invalidate the Hebrew text, but most of the learned of that church have not prosecuted this method, as it is well-known they have generally held the Hebrew text to be uncorrupted; and the same is defended by the greatest part of learned Protestants, who have treated on this subject.

Voſſius is the only writer of eminence, who asserts that the Hebrew Bible, as it now is, is corrupted by the Jews. But in reply to him and all others, ancient and modern, who maintain this opinion, we offer the following considerations.

If the Jews corrupted the Hebrew text, they did it either *before* or *after* the time of Christ; that they did it not *before*, is evident, because our blessed Lord never mentions any such corruption, which he certainly would not have omitted, at such times as he reproved the Scribes and Pharisees for their known faults and offences, especially those which related to the law; as for instance, when he charged them with *making the law of God of none effect by their traditions.* Certainly he would have rebuked them for so gross a fault, when he corrected them for some, which were less atrocious and pernicious in their nature and tendency. Nay, the Jews are not only not reproved for corrupting the canon of scripture, but on the contrary their care and faithfulness in preserving it whole and entire are particularly mentioned, *Luke* iv. 16, 17. *Acts* xiii. 17, and xv. 21. and commended *Rom.* iii. 2. Besides, Christ sends his auditors to the Old Testament to read and *ſearch* it, *John* v. 39. Whereas if they had corrupted it, he would beyond all doubt, have cautioned them against it.

Further, Christ and his Apostles constantly proved their doctrine, and confuted the Jews out of those very writings; which is an infallible argument, that in the time of our Saviour those books were not corrupted; otherwise he and the Apostles would not have so frequently quoted them, and used the testimony of almost every particular book as authentic, and of divine inspiration.

That the Hebrew text was not corrupted *after* the time of our Saviour is manifest, because the testimonies cited out of the Old Testament, by those that succeeded Christ and his Apostles, are found to the same in those writings now without the least variance.

Nor can it be shewed at what time after Christ, the alteration or corruption of the text began; though some have presumptuously affirmed,

it was presently after the destruction of Jerusalem, which has not yet been proved.

Farther, if we observe those passages in the Hebrew text, which some alledge are corrupted by the Jews, we shall find there was no ground, cause, or occasion for any such corruption. If they changed the text, it was doubtless for their own ends, and to maintain some error, which they had broached; in this case, the alteration would have been in those places, especially which speak of Christ the true Messiah, but we cannot discover any such alteration.

Among the many texts which are said to be changed and corrupted, their is scarcely one to be found, that relates to the sufferings and death of the blessed Jesus; whence we may conclude that the Old Testament remains altogether unaltered and uncorrupted.

We might on this occasion again observe, that there were multitudes of copies dispersed every where, both before and after the time of our Saviour, so that it was impossible to corrupt them all. Upon the whole then we conclude, that the Bible is pure and uncorrupt, and after all the disputes about the various readings, it is undeniable, that their is no difference in the Hebrew copies, as to any thing considerable and of moment; it affects not any necessary point of religion, which we are bound to believe or practice.

In the several copies, the same historical facts are related, the same miracles recorded, the same peophecies and predictions enumerated, the same doctrines and precepts inculcated, and that without any variation. So that we are certain of the validity of the Hebrew text is the same notwithstanding what has been suggested to the contrary, we are assured that we have the authentic copies of the original writing. In a word, we are confirmed in our judgment, that the Hebrew text is the same, that it was and is still in its original purity.

Having observed thus much concerning the sacred canon of the Old Testament, we shall now endeavour to prove, that the authority of the New Testament is equally confirmed by *external teſtimonies*, or tradition. We have the authentic suffrage of the primitive church, and the unanimous consent of the christians of the first ages, that this book is of divine inspiration, and that it is pure and uncorrupted.

Some of the fathers and first writers give us a catalogue of the books of the New Testament, and they are the very same with those which we have at this day. Athanasius particularly, enumerating those books, sets down all those which we now embrace as canonical, and no others.

Many of the fathers of the first ages after Christ, as *Irenæus, Juſtin, Martyr, Clemens, Alexandrinus, Origen, Tertullian, &c.* quote the places in the New Testament, as they now stand upon record.

If it be objected, that in the fathers, *ſometime*, the text of scripture is not exactly what we find it, and read it at this day; it must be remembered

membered that they sometimes quoted the meaning, and not the very words. At other times, their memories failed them, as to the words, and thence they changed them into others; and instead of those in the text, used some that were like them. So when they were in haste, and not at leisure to consult the text, they used such words and expressions as they thought came nearest to it.

Sometimes they contract the words of the text, and give only the brief sense of it. At other times they enlarge it, and present us with a comment upon it. Sometimes (as they see occasion, and as their subject leads them to it) they transpose the words, and even the parts of the text.

But no persons should hence infer, that the scriptures of the New Testament then and now are not the very same. With respect to the number of the sacred writers and their books, it has always been the same; that is, the same catalogue and canon have been generally acknowledged and received by the Christian church.

It is true indeed, some particular books have been questioned, but by a few only, and that only for time: but the church was at length fully satisfied concerning them; and the generality of Christians agreed to own all those books which are now owned by us.

All the Eastern churches held the epistle to the Hebrews to be canonical, though the Latins, it is granted, were not so unanimous. This epistle, and that of St. *James*, the second epistle of St. *Peter*, and the *Apocalypse* or *Revelation*, were questioned in the first century, according to the account of *Eusebius*, but he acquaints us withal, that they were afterwards, by general consent, received into the canons of holy scripture, for the doubts were resolved upon mature deliberation; so that the very question of those books is now a confirmation of their truth and authority: they were once subjects of doubt, that for the future they might be rendered unquestionable. With respect to the rest of the books of the New Testament, they were never doubted of at all, but have the approbation of the whole church.

That the New Testament was first written in Greek, as we now receive it, is attested by the universal consent of the ancients, who made enquiry into these things. Only two books are excepted by some; for though many of the learned moderns maintain that St. *Matthew's* gospel was written originally in Greek, yet it cannot be denied, that some of the fathers hold it was first written in Hebrew for the sake of the believing Jews.

If we credit St. *Jerome*, the original Hebrew was extant in his time, and he translated the gospel into Latin from that copy. Who translated it into Greek, cannot be ascertained; but it was either St. *Matthew*, himself, or some apostolical person inspired by the Holy Ghost; so that the Greek version in our hands, is from the same Spirit, and of the same authority with the others.

The fathers likewise are generally of

of opinion, that St. *Paul* wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, in their own tongue; and that St. *Luke*, or St. *Clement*, translated it into Greek.

The contrary is held by some of more modern date, both of the Roman and reformed religion; but excepting these two books, it is universally agreed, that the whole New Testament was written in Greek; and one reason might be, because so great a number of Jews lived among the Greeks, and used their tongue; and therefore this part of the Bible was properly written in Greek, as the other was long before translated into that tongue for the use of the Jews. For the sake of these dispersed Jews (therefore called *the dispersed among the Gentiles*, or according to the original, *the dispersion of the Greeks*, John vii. 35.) who understood and spoke the Greek language, the New Testament was put forth in that tongue. Moreover, this was the more generally received language at that time, and therefore the most proper for the propagation of the gospel.

This is a very good argument; for though we do not think that the Jews at Jerusalem spake no other than the Greek tongue among themselves as some confidently assert; yet it is certain, that the Greek tongue was universally understood, and was with the Latins the language of the empire, and consequently most proper for communicating the Christian religion to the world.

Tully informs us, that in all the Roman empire, Greek was commonly understood: it is no wonder therefore that the New Testament was in that tongue, and that St. *Paul* writes not only to the Galatians, but to the Romans in Greek, for they all understood it. It was the language of the polite at Rome, as the French is now with us; their very women affected to learn and speak Greek, for which they are jeered by a celebrated satirist.

In short, all the Eastern people spoke Greek, more or less, from the time that *Alexander* the Great, and his commanders, spread their dominions in the East.

The Syrians, Egyptians, Persians, and people of the lesser Asia, were acquainted with that language. The Jews of any considerable quality understood Greek, as well as their own tongue; whence *Josephus*, a Jewish priest (or of the priestly stock) wrote his book in the fashionable language.

The Evangelists and Apostles then might well write in the same tongue, it being so extensive, and generally understood. It is especially on another account no wonder, that St. *Paul* wrote in Greek, for it was his native tongue, being of Tarsus, which was a city of Greece. We may then very justly look on the Greek language, as the original text of the New Testament.

It is generally agreed that these Greek copies which we have now in use are true and authentic, though in some things they differ, and none are observed to oppose them, but those who do it from some motive of interest

interest and design; that is, to maintain some peculiar opinion, or indulge some particular prejudice.

The variety of reading should not prejudice us, much less ought we to alter the reading of the copies, to one; and we may observe with an excellent author, that "it is morally "impossible, since the time of our "Saviour, and indeed for many "hundred years before that, that the "scriptures (particularly of the Old "Testament) should have been cor-"rupted: for the multitude of co-"pies was then such, hath been since "much more such, and so far dispers-"ed, that neither one man, nor one "body of men, could ever get them "into their hands to corrupt them; "and if some few or many copies "had been corrupted, but not all, "the pure number would have de-"tected the corrupt."

Again, let it be considered, that all the ancient orthodox writers of the church cite those scriptures, as we now have them, in every thing essential, which together with divers reasons already assigned, may confirm our belief, that these books of the Old and New Testament were indeed written by those authors, under whose names they are now received; that these scriptures which we now have, are the same which the primitive church received from the Apostles; that the copies we have of the Bible, are not corrupted; that God hath preserved the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament from all considerable change and depravation (his Providence not permitting any such thing) that the canon of scripture which is now received, is the very same that it was at first, and which is the sum and substance of all, that the truth and authority of it are impregnable.

Thus we have argued from tradition and the testimony of the church in order to prove the authenticity and divine original of the scriptures, and if the argument be properly supported, it will appear to be valid; for the truth of the copies, and the authority of the canon, are not to be decided by scripture; but in the way that all controversies of that nature are handled.

As you would prove any other book to be authentic, so you must prove the Bible to be, viz. by sufficient testimony.

There is the same reason for believing the sacred history that there is for believing any other historical writings that are extant; nay, the testimonies in behalf of the scriptures, are more numerous than those that can be urged for any other writings.

Beside, all that can be said for the sacred volume in common with other writings, we have shewn that this has some peculiar evidences above all others.

The main point we have insisted on is that the books of the Old and New Testament have been faithfully conveyed to us, and that they are vouched by the constant and universal tradition, both of the Jewish and Christian church; and that these books, and no others, are of the canon of scripture; for to be of the

canon of scripture is no other than to be owned by the universal church for writings divinely inspired. The church witnesses and confirms the authority of the canonical scriptures; for she received them as divine, and delivered them to us as such.

But to prevent mistakes, we desire that it may be observed, we do not insinuate, that the scriptures derive their authority meerly from the testimony of the church. As a clerk in any court writes down and testifies, that such an act, decree or order, was passed by the king, magistrate or people, and witnesses that he hath faithfully kept these by him, and that they are the very same that at such time were passed by the aforesaid authority; yet the authority of this act, decree or order, rests not in the clerk, but wholly in the king, magistrate or people. So the church records and keeps the sacred writings of the Bible, and bear witness that they have been faithfully preserved, and that they are the genuine writings of those persons whose names are prefixed to them; but the divine authority of the scriptures depend not on the church, but on the books, and authors themselves, being divinely inspired.

Indeed the authority of the scriptures cannot depend on the church, because the church itself depends on the scriptures. These must be proved before the church can be proved to be properly constituted.

We cannot know the church but by the scriptures. Therefore the scriptures must be known before the church.

It follows then, that the papists are very unreasonable and absurd in making the ultimate resolution of faith to be in the testimony and authority of the church. This we, as protestants, disown as a palpable error; but at the same time it is reasonable to hold, that the testimony of the church is one good argument and proof of the truth of the sacred scripture; according to that saying of St. *Auguſtine, I ſhould not believe the Goſpel, if the authority of the church did not move me.* Not that he founds the gospel or the doctrine of christianity, and the truth of it, on the testimony of the church, as the papists are wont to infer from these words, and frequently quote them to this purpose. The father's meaning is this; that by the testimony and consent of the church, he believed the book of the gospel, to be the very book that was written by the Evangelists.

That this is the sense of the expression is plain from the scope of it; for he speaks there of the copies or writings, not the doctrine contained in them. He seems to rely on this; that so great a number of persons of knowledge and integrity as composed the church, asserted the Evangelical writings to be the writings of such as were really inspired by the Holy Ghost: and that they were true and genuine, and not corrupted.

The whole body of scripture is attested by the same universal suffrage of the church, that is, the unanimous consent of the Apostles, and of the first christians, and of those that

that immediately succeeded them; several of which laid their lives down, to vindicate the truth of these writings.

This is the *external teſtimony* given to the holy scriptures. It is the general persuasion and attestation of the ancient church, that these are the scriptures of truth; that they were penned by holy Prophets and Apostles, immediately directed by the Holy Spirit of God, who therefore could not err.

It was usual heretofore among the Pagan law-givers, to attribute their laws to some diety, though they were of their own invention, intending thereby to conciliate reverence to them, and to commend them to the people. But there is no such cheat put upon us. God himself is really the author of the holy scriptures; these sacred laws come immediately from him; they are of divine inspiration. There is no doubt of the divinity of the scriptures, and consequently there is assurance of the infallibility of them.

As it may reasonably be expected that we should treat of the Apochryphal books, before we dismiss this subject, we shall endeavour to discuss the nature and use of them, especially as they are appointed to be read in the course of our liturgy.

We find these books excluded from the canon of scripture, by those who must be deemed to have been the best judges, viz. the Jews, who were the great keepers of the scriptures. They never took these into the number of the books of holy writ, and that for these two reasons.

First, Because they were not written by the Prophets. The Jews believed that the spirit of prophecy ceased among them, as soon as Malachi ceased to prophecy.

They acknowledged no divine inspiration after his time, and accordingly received not the Apochryphal books into the *canon of ſcripture*, that is, books divinely inspired.

What was written after the time of Malachi, who was the last Prophet, was not canonical, was not of divine authority, and therefore is not emphatically called *ſcripture*, for as *all ſcripture is given by inſpiration, and* HOLY MEN *ſpoke, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.*

Inspiration is the mark and criterion of scripture, consequently those writings which were not by inspiration of God, nor from the immediate dictate of the Holy Ghost, are not to be accounted *holy ſcriptures*, and such are the *Apochryphal writings*, they were written after the cessation of prophecy and divine inspiration, and therefore are not of divine authority, and cannot be esteemed *canonical ſcriptures.*

Secondly, the Jews received not the Apocrypha into their canon, because it was written in Greek, not in Hebrew, as all their canonical books are; for they affirm that God would not give them scriptures in an unknown tongue: The oracles of God were to be committed to his people in the authentic language, which is that of the Jews; the Apocryphal writings not being such are rejected by them, and not taken into the canon of sacred writ.

As

As they were not received by the Jewish church, neither are they by the christian: It is very remarkable that Christ and his Apostles, who frequently quote the canonical books, never quote any of the Apochryphal ones; which gives us to understand, that they were not reputed as inspired writings, otherwise it is most reasonable to think, that our Saviour, or the Evangelists and Apostles would at one time or other have cited some one passage out of these books, it being evidently their great work to prove the truth of what they delivered from the holy scriptures, which were inspired by God in former times.

They embraced all occasions of establishing christianity upon the writings of the inspired Prophets, who went before; therefore if the Apochryphal writings had been of the number, they would certainly have been quoted by them; and because they are not, it is an argument that they are not inspired writings.

Again, the christian church which immediately succeeded that which was in the days of Christ and his Apostles, received not these writings as divinely inspired, and therefore excluded them from the canon of scripture.

Look in the writings of the ancient fathers (who doubtless made it their business to search into the canon of scripture, and to be satisfied which were the books that were divinely inspired) and there you will see that those of the eastern church received only the Jews canon of scripture as the Old Testament.

Thus *Origin* recites the canonical books of it as they are now reckoned, and *Cyril of Jeruſalem* hath these express words: "Read two and "twenty books, [that is, all the ca-"nonical ones] but have nothing to "do with the Apocryphal ones. "Study and meditate only on these "scriptures, which we confidently "read in the church. The Apostles "and first bishops were their guides, "and were more wise and religious "than thou art; and these were the "men who delivered these scriptures "to us. Thou then being a son of "the church, do not go beyond her "bounds and order, but acknow-"ledge and study only two and "twenty books of the Old Testa-"ment."

Other fathers of the church testify that these books, and no others, of the Old Testament, which we receive now, were the canonical books of old, and received as such by the first christians.

Those eminent lights of the latin church *Ruſinus*, *Jerom*, and *Hilary*, disown as canonical, the books of Apochrypha, the two latter are very positive; *Jerom* expressly declares, that the canonical books of the Old Testament are but two and twenty, the exact number of the Hebrew alphabet; and he enumerates the particular books which constitute the whole.

Hilary likewise gives us the just catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, and peremptorily affirms that there are but two and twenty canonical ones, which are the same with the thirty nine, according to the reckoning in our Bibles.

There

There is another reason, besides the universal suffrage of the Christian church, why the Apocryphal books are ejected out of the canon; it is this, because some things are false and contrary to the canonical scriptures, as in *Ecclesiasticus* xlvi. 20. 1 *Esdras* vi. 40. and some things are vicious, as in *Maccabees* xiv. 42.

After these observations, it is easy to answer what the Romanists alledge in support of the other side of the question. They quote the third council of Carthage, which they tell us received the Apocryphal books into the canon; among the fathers they affirm St. *Augustin* over them; besides that two popes, *Innocent* the first, and *Gelasius* took these books which we stile Apocryphal into the canon.

As for the council which they alledge, it was but a provincial one, and therefore cannot be set in competition with more authentic and general councils who have affirmed to the contrary. Nor must one single father whom they quote, stand out against a great number of Greek and Latin fathers, who concur in rejecting the Apocryphal book.

The popes bear great sway with our adversaries, but they are but two in number, and cannot be compared with those councils, and that multitude of fathers who assert and maintain our opinion.

Yet after all that hath been said, we esteem the Apocryphal writings worthy of being read and perused. Though there are some things amiss in them, yet we pay much deference to them, as containing many historical facts, and furnishing us with matter of Jewish antiquity, as likewise because there are many doctrinal and moral truths in them, especially in the books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*.

For this cause we bear great respect to them, rank them next to the holy canon, and prefer them to all prophane authors. They obtained this preference from the ancient fathers, who frequently mentioned them in their sermons and discourses, which seems to be the reason why these Apocryphal books were made canonical by some of the church of Rome.

But all that can be inferred from hence is, that these books were in their kind useful and profitable, as indeed they are; therefore St. *Jerom* writes, the *Church receives not these books into the canon of scripture, though she allows them to be read.* Concerning these writings, our church well saith [quoting St. *Jerom* for it.] *She doth read them for example of life, and instruction of manners, but yet doth not apply them to establish any doctrine.*

Now this affords us an exact notion of the nature of these books, which is, that they contain excellent rules of life, and are very useful to inform us of our duty in several important points, but as they are not dictated by the Holy Ghost, as the other books of scripture, they are not the infallible standard of divine doctrine, and therefore are not to be applied and made use of to that purpose: thus have we endeavoured

to state the nature and use of the Apocryphal writings, according to our own judgment, and that of many learned and pious men, and apprehend upon the whole that the impartial reader will be convinced that these writings, though good in general, want the confirmation of a divine original, and therefore ought not to be numbered among the books of canonical scripture.

But to return to our immediate purpose; let us consider what authority the sacred writings derive from the testimony of enemies and strangers, especially of Pagans.

It is a maxim in civil law, and adopted by all men of reason and reflection, that the testimony of an enemy is of all others most decisive.

The Jewish and Christian church, as we have shewn already, give their testimony to the scriptures; but besides these witnesses there are others, there is the attestation of foreigners and adversaries. These fully testify the truth of what is delivered in the Holy Bible, we have the approbation of Heathen writers to confirm many of the things related in the Old Testament, and both professed Heathens and Jews attest sundry things of the New Testament, and vouch the truth and authority of the same.

We shall proceed distinctly, and begin with the Old, observing that in several particulars, even the Pagan world, gives testimony to this sacred volume; that the Gentiles relate many circumstances therein contained; and that the great truths, fundamental principles, and equitable practices which we read in the books of the Old Testament, are to be met with in prophane writers, but evidently appear to be taken from the sacred authors.

The Heathens borrowed many of their rites and ceremonies from traditions which were formed in the holy scriptures. They derived many things respecting their religion and manners, from the sacred fountain, though it is certain they have most industriously laboured to pollute them: but we hope to render it manifest that they borrowed them from thence, and to prove at the same time, that the principal subjects of the Old Testament have been attested both by the fabulous and serious history of the Pagans.

We could mention many writers who have carried this notion beyond the limits of reason and probability, and conjectured that every occurrence in the Pagan history, had some reference to, or was derived from the holy scriptures.

But we shall avoid such vain and idle notions, and only represent to the curious, and critical enquirers, those passages in Pagan writers, which with great reason we may conclude were taken from the books of the Old Testament. In a word, we shall endeavour to present the sacred history of the Bible, through the fables of the Heathens, in order to add to the validity the confirmation of those truths. Now let us consider.

1. The creation: this, as it is particularly described in the first chapter

chapter of *Geneſis*, is plainly to be found in Pagan authors; who without doubt, derived it from scripture; for though a man by the light of nature may know that the world had a beginning, yet the particular manner of its beginning, as described by some Heathen authors could not be known but by divine revelation; wherefore it is with much reason asserted, that the Pagans borrowed this notion from God's revealed will in scripture, and as a consequence, that they hereby attest the truth of the sacred volume.

The general opinion of the ancient Gentiles was, that the world was made out of a preceding chaos, which they represent as a rude, indigested mass of matter, reduced to no shape or form.

The ancient poet *Orpheus* held, that this chaos was the first principle of all things. *Heſiod* agrees with him, affirming that the chaos was that out of which all bodies were made. *Ovid* gives this description in a very particular manner, in the beginning of his metamorphoses; where, in beautiful language, he defines the origin of all things. Now this description of the Latin poet will, on an impartial comparison, appear to be founded on those words of *Moſes*, Gen. ii. *The earth was without form, and void; and darkneſs was on the face of the deep.*

This dark and formless heap of *water and earth* mingled together, contained in it the first elements of all things that were made afterwards, hence sprang the world, as it is now shaped and modelled.

From the account which *Moſes* gives of the creation, the old Pagan writers made the ocean to be the origin of all generations: their proposition in fact is no other than this, that the *moiſt* and *fluid matter* gave being to all bodies that exist.

Hence it is that some of the stoics held the chaos to be no other than water, as *Philo* informs us: they think (says he) that water and the chaos being the same, the latter term is derived from a Greek word, which signifies flowing or pouring out.

Hence *Seneca* declares it to be the opinion of this sect of philosophers, that water is the first principle of all things.

Thales, one of the first that made enquiry into nature, expressly maintained, that all things were produced of water. The words of *Tully* concerning this ancient philosopher, are very remarkable, "*Thales* affirmed (said he) that water was the beginning of things, and that God was that mind which made all things of water."

This seems most signally to refer to what *Moſes* says, speaking of the origin of the universe, that *the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters*, Gen. i. 2. giving us to understand, that water and slime were the material cause and first principle of all things; and that God was that spirit or mind which made all things out of those first waters.

The Egyptians were of this opinion, and therefore worshipped this element, as *Strabo* observes: without doubt, the Ancients borrowed from

from the Mosaical history, that notion which implies, " that at the " first creation, all things were con- " tained in water, and lay brood- " ing there together, and conse- " quently that water was the pri- " mitive matter of the universe."

To the chaos and water the Ancients added another concurrent principle, namely night: that the world had its beginning from night and chaos, was a universal tradition of the Pagans, both poets and philosophers, such as *Hesiod* and *Homer*, among the former; and *Thales* and *Plato*, among the latter. These frequently speak of chaos and night, or erebus, and tells us, that all things were begotten by them; which opinion is doubtless derived from those words in *Gen.* i. 2. *Darkness was on the face of the deep.*

The deep is their chaos, and the darkness is their night or erebus; for the known and usual signification of the latter term is darkness. Hence the Pagans, who had seen some of these writings, came to have this sentiment, that night and darkness were the first principles of the world. This is the same with what *Moses* delivers, only it is expressed in different terms.

The ancient philosophers have likewise agreed with the Mosaic account concerning God's divining, separating, and digesting of this confused chaos and darkness.

Anaxargoras has been reckoned by some in the number of ancient Atheists, but with little reason; for (as *Plutarch* writes of him) he was the first that denied fortune or fate to be the cause or principle of the fair order and harmony of the universe. *Diogenes Laerius* gives these as his very words; " All things were in a " heap and jumble at first: after- " wards came the eternal mind, and " disposed and ordered them in an " excellent manner."

Tully asserts, " That those parti- " cles of infinite matter, which were " alike in themselves and at first very " confused, were afterwards brought " into order by the divine mind." This was the work of God in the creation. Now whence have they this notion concerning the origin of the world? these speculations concerning the rise of the world were not their own; they were traditional principles; that is, they received them from the Bible; their philosophy in this point was founded on the account of the divine penman *Moses*; the sum of which was, that God first of all produced a chaos, that is, the rude beginnings of earth swallowed up and even overwhelmed with the *watery abyss*, out of which dark, confused and indigested materials, he made all things, both in Heaven and earth, as out of the first matter, which by a divine skill and power he separated and divided, till it arose to the excellent and complete frame wherein it appears at this day.

Thus the ancient philosophy of the Gentiles was borrowed from the Mosaic description of the creation; thus the writings of the most renowned Heathen philosophers bear witness to the first penman of the Old Testament.

2d. The production of *Adam* and *Eve*,

Eve, is attested by the same persons. That the first man was formed of the earth, or clay of the ground, is affirmed by the most authentic authors among them.

We shall omit several quotations out of the Greek poets, who were the first philosophers among the Pagans, as *Orpheus*, *Heſiod*, and *Homer*, who testify this very thing, and refer to *Ovid*, who was well acquainted with all the ancient notions of the Gentiles, and relates the chief passages in the Mosaic story concerning the original of the world, and that in words as near to those of *Moſes* as possible.

In the close of his account of the creation, he writes, *Metam. lib.* 1. "That man was made after the "creation of all other things, that "he was endowed with superior un- "derstanding, that he was made to "have dominion over all other cre- "ated things."

Now this exactly agrees with the account of *Moſes*, Gen. i. 26. where we read, that man was made to have dominion over the *fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every thing that moveth on the earth.*

Here are two of the chief things which are delivered in the beginning of that sacred history *Geneſis*; that man was made last of all, and to have rule and dominion over all the creation.

Ovid applied and attributed this formation of man to *Promotheus*, the name certainly of the wise God; for *Promotheus* with the Greeks (from whom he borrowed this) is *wiſe, provident, ſagacious:* and this *Promotheus* formed a man of clay, which agreeth with the formation of *Adam*, recorded by the inspired writer.

When *Ovid* adds, that *he took fire from Heaven to animate his lumpleſs clay*, we must pardon this innocent addition; for it was the constant practice of these men to put in something of their own, in order to disguise the sacred story with their own fable and invention; though in this case we have reason to applaud the poet, who knew that dull and inert matter, could not actuate and enliven itself, but that there was need of some heavenly and divine principle to set it on work, some active ray of life from above to inspire it. What then is this, but the *breath of life* mentioned in *Gen.* ii. 7. by which man's body was enlived and invigorated? for when it is there said, that *God formed man out of the earth*, it is immediately added, *He breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and man became a living ſoul;* from which manner of expression, and that other in *Gen.* vii. 22. *the breath of the ſpirit of life*, the eminent sages among the Greeks (who were no strangers to this and other texts,) derived two notions.

The first was, that the soul is *breath:* and accordingly in the Greek and Latin, it hath its name, from a word which signifies, *breathing.*

Another notion which they derived from this metaphorical expression of breathing or afflation was, that the soul, the rational soul of man is a part of God; for as breath is something that comes from within a man; so souls (that are set forth

by breath) are the emanations of God; they came from him, and are parts of him. All this is derived (if we mistake not) from that passage, in the Mosaic history, concerning the production of man, God breathed into him the *breath of life.*

The making of *Eve* out of *Adam* was absolutely intimated in the Greek term, which *Plato* uses to describe the first man: it signifies a mixture of both sexes.

This fable of *Plato* was from the Jewish tradition, that the first man was made an Hermaphrodite; that he had two bodies joined together, the one male, the other female; and that the Creator divided him into two distinct bodies, whence arose man and woman.

If the Jewish rabbies (who were better acquainted with scripture) entertained this rule and random opinion, *Plato* may be well excused, who perhaps had it only on tradition, and had not the means to correct his mistakes which they had. But it is plain beyond a demonstration, that this fable is a corruption of the sacred story, which speaking of our first parents, saith, *God called their name* Adam; as if they having but one name, signified they were but one person. And again, in the same verse, *male and female created he them*; as if the first man, who is spoken of in the verse immediately foregoing, consisted of a double sex. It is evident that the words relate to both, and the reason why the name *Adam* is given to both, is because they were both of them from the earth, one immediately, the other remotely; but afterwards we read that they had distinct names, *Adam* being appropriated to the man, and *Eve* to the woman.

This ridiculous fable which the Heathen philosopher had picked up, might be occasioned likewise from a misunderstanding of the text; *God took one of the man's ribs, and out of it made he a woman;* because the woman was found out of the man's side; they inferred that *Adam* was at first both man and woman, and that the woman at her first make stuck to his side, which though a gross error confirms the truth and antiquity of the book of *Moſes* that assures us of *Eve's* formation out of *Adam*, which was the circumstance that gave rise to this erroneous tradition.

The first and innocent state of man, together with some circumstances, which could be known only from the book of Moses, is spoken of by the ancient writers among the Heathen. Thus *Heſiod* gives us an admirable description of it; and *Plato* in his *politics* tells us, that in those primitive times, man got his living without trouble and labour, that he fed only on the fruit of the earth, and that nakedness was one attendant of that first and golden age of the world, alluding to *Gen.* ii. 25. *They were both naked, the man and his wife.* So an ancient writer informs us, that the Egyptians find in their old writings, that the first men and women were naked; in the sibylline verses, which are borrowed from the scripture, the same allegories and descriptions are used

used in setting forth the happy age, which you find used in the sacred volume.

Without doubt the blessed state of paradise is referred to by *Ovid*, in his description of the golden age, or *Saturn's* reign. There we may see represented the simplicity and innocence of our first parents, the peace and tranquility, the contentment and satisfaction which were peculiar to the state of integrity. *Paradise* itself the seat of this happiness seems to have been known by the ancient Pagans, for it is probable their writers understood this, when they tell us of the Elysian field; for gardens, (such as was paradise) and pleasant fields are the same with them.

Plato in describing these observes, that they were blessed with a mild and gentle air, pleasant streams, a constant spring, fragrant flowers and fruit ever growing. Of these *Virgil* speaks in his sixth *Æneid;* it is not improbable, that some or all of these Greek fables were founded in truth, and arose from the account of the inspired books, which informs us, *that God placed man in a garden*, the garden of *Eden*, which signifies pleasure and delight; for it is further added that *here grew every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food*, Gen. ii. 9.

And this garden was the platform of those before-mentioned, so the tree of life in this garden gave rise to the poets *Nectar* and *Ambrosia*, which are no other than the food and repast of those earthly gods, which they suppose to have inhabited Elysium.

Nectar (according to one derivation of it) made the drinkers ever youthful; and another etymology speaks this drink to be such as suffers them not to die. These were the very blessings of the *tree of life*, which should have made the eaters of it immortal, and secured them in a state of blessedness for ever.

Thus the production of man, and divers things referring to his blessed state of innocency, which are found in the writings of the Heathens, were derived from the sacred fountains, and consequently the writings of these Heathens do in some measure attest and confirm to us the truth and certainty of the holy scriptures.

3d. The fall of *Adam*, and the several particulars relating to it are to be found in these Pagan records.

The fore-runners of it, viz. the degenerate Angels are spoken of by that ancient philosopher *Empedocles*, as *Plutarch* relates, for whom else could he mean by his *Dæmons*, to whom he gives a Greek appellation, that signifies *Heaven-fallen* creatures, than these apostate spirits, who were thrust down from the region of happiness above, and became Devils, from their opposing the government of the Most High?

It appears highly probable to suppose, that our first parent *Eve* was meant by *Pandora*, whom *Hesiod* and others of the ancients mention, acquainting us, that out of her deadly box, which she gave to *Epimetheus*,

flew

flew all evil into the world, and thereby she became the original of all the miserable occurrences that happen to mankind.

Eve was this *Pandora*, who presented the *fruit of the tree unto her husband*, as it is expressed, *Gen.* iii. 6. and he himself afterwards with unspeakable regret, and too late an insight into his condition (whence he justly merits his title of *Epimetheus*) repeats the same, *She gave me of it*, ver. 13. and with it imparted all evil to mankind; from that unhappy gift therefore, and from her imparting all evils to the world, she had the name of *Pandora* among the first Greek poets, who had learned from the inspired writings, that from her sprung all the miseries and calamities of this life, and even death itself.

With respect to *original sin*, and the early corruption and depravation of man's nature, which was the fruit of our first parent's transgression, we cannot but observe, that it was mentioned by the Gentiles of old, who call it the *congenite sin*, that is, the sin that is born with us, the *domestic evil of mankind the natural repugnancy of man's temper to reason, a mortal kind of life, a many-headed beast, &c.*

The moralists are full of such notions, and complain of the infirmity of human nature that it is very much depraved; that the fountains are polluted, the springs defiled; and that man is propense to all evil, and averse to what is good and virtuous.

The Greek and Roman philosophers all complain of the low and degenerate condition of man, especially the best sects, which were the stoics and platonists.

Seneca frequently in his epistles and other discourses, acknowledges, and mournfully reflects upon the lapse of human nature.

Others speak most feelingly of the defect of a former innocency, of the departure of souls from God, of the strong propensity of human nature to evil, &c.

This is not mentioned as if we imagined, they might not partly derive these notions from an inward sense they had of their innate evil; but only to infer the probability that there was a tradition among them concerning the first cause and author of this evil.

Plato himself speaks very sensibly of this loss of the first state of purity and happiness, and relates the defection of man from his primitive condition, from whence he saith flowed all mischiefs into the world. This philosopher held, that men's souls were created happy, and that afterwards they apostatized. Now it is highly probable, that from the writings of *Moses* (with which he was acquainted) he derived the account of man's fall, and then wrapped it up in this obscure manner, which was his usual method, as appears from his writings.

If we enquire further, we shall find that the Gentile world was not ignorant of the several circumstances of the fall. It was an ancient tradition amongst the Pagans, that a kind of malignant spirits, malicious dæmons,

dæmons, envied the happiness of mankind, and did what they could to molest them, and to hinder them of their felicity.

The Pagans and Platonic philosophers often speak of these envious and malicious spirits; the origin of which we can conceive to be no other than that mentioned by *Moſes* concerning the Devil's tempting our first parents, *Gen.* iii. 1, &c.

There was also this circumstance of the history of man's fall among the Heathens, *that the Devil appeared in the likeneſs of a Serpent;* preparatory to which is that which *Plato* saith, that in *Saturn's* days, people *could talk and hold diſcourſe with beaſts as well as men*, alluding to the well known colloquy between *Eve* and the *Serpent*, and her seduction by holding discourse with him.

The Devil's assuming the form of a Serpent, and his circumventing our first parents thereby, is intimated to the Heathens by *Pherecydes*, an ancient writer, who uses the Greek word for *Serpent*, as the title of that great one, who opposed *Saturn*. The truth of which story is, that the apostate Angels, or Devils, opposed God at the beginning of the world; the ringleader of which cursed spirits was he, that in the shape of a serpent assaulted our first parents. That was that *demoniacal ſerpent*.

Euſebius is of the same opinion, affirming that this *Ophionens* (the Greek word) refers to the devil in the form of a serpent; and adds that *Pherecydes* was conversant with the *Phœnicians*, who worshipped this deity under the form of a serpent, the devil affecting to be adored in that shape and form which he first assumed.

Upon the whole, from what has been observed under this head, every candid person must allow, that there are manifest allusions in the Pagan writers, to the fall of man, and its dire effects, and consequently, that their authenticity receives confirmation thereby. But,

4thly. From the fall of man, till after the confusion of tongues, and dispersion of *Babel*, there are many singular circumstances related by Pagan writers, of which they could have no knowledge, but from the Old Testament.

Enoch's being taken up by God, gave occasion to the stories of their heroes being translated, of *Aſtrea* and others leaving the world, and ascending to Heaven alive, and being transformed into stars and celestial signs.

Again, the testimonies of the Pagans concerning the long lives of the people of the first age of the world, was evidently taken from the sacred history, according to what *Joſephus* affirms, "All that have "committed unto writing the an- "tiquities, either of the Greek or "Barbarians, attest this longevity "of the men before the flood." And immediately he subjoins, "*Ma-* "*nethos*, the Egyptian writer, *Be-* "*roſus*, the Chaldean, and *Jerom*, "the Egyptian agree with us in this. "Also *Heſiod*, with *Hecatæus*, *Hell-* "*nanicus*, and *Acuſilaus*; *Ephorus* "and *Nicolas* tell us, that those "people of old lived a thousand

" years." *Joseph Antiq. Lib.* 1. " chap. 4.

Now this is an indisputable confirmation of the truth of what we read so often in the account of *Moses* concerning the first people of the world, viz. that they commonly lived seven, eight, or nine hundred years.

The greek and latin poets relate likewise, that there were giants in the primitive times of the world, which was probably borrowed from *Gen.* vi. [illegible]ere *Moses* speaking of the time[illegible]ore the flood, tells us, that *there were giants* in the earth in those days.

Berosus, the Chaldean priest and historian, relates how wicked and debauched the old world was, how *Noah* told them of it, and of their approaching destruction by means of the deluge, the fame of which was universally spread among the Pagans, most of their historians, according to *Josephus*, have made mention of *Noah's* flood.

Lucian mentions most of the particulars which are recorded in the sixth and seventh chapters of *Genesis*, concerning the deluge; such as the *natural* cause of it, which was the excessive rain or fall of water from Heaven, and the opening of the fountain below. Likewise the *moral* cause of it; the corruption and wickedness of the world; that people at that time violated their oaths, entertained not strangers, were hardened against the cries of distress, that they were in every respect vicious, profligate, and abandoned, and thereby deserved this heavy judgment. The same author mentions the preservation of *Noah*, and his family in the ark, with the manner of their being preserved, namely, by sheltering themselves in a great ark, and that thus he and his wife and children were reserved for a second generation. That this befel *Noah* on account of his singular piety; that with him entered into the ark, two of every species of animals, and being shut up there, they offered no violence to each other, but maintained the greatest harmony.

Noah's erecting an altar, after he came out of the ark, is expressly taken notice of. These are the circumstances, saith *Lucian*, which the *Greeks* relate from their archives of the flood; all of which exactly correspond with the narrative of *Moses*; only *Deuclion* is put instead of *Noah*.

Plutarch, an author of great repute, speaks of sending the dove out of the ark, as a sign of the abating of the flood, or rather to discover whether the waters were decreased; and he adds, that it turned into the ark again; but this author, as well as the former, disguises Noah, under the name of *Deucalion*, it being the usual manner of the Greeks, to affix new names to persons.

From the dove's bringing in an olive-branch, we find in all ages that this hath been ever the symbol of peace and concord, of agreement and friendship.

Livy tells us, it was so among the *Carthagians*, and among the *Greeks*.

Polybius informs us, that it was the same among the most barbarous nations; for when *Hannibal* was pasing

passing the *Alps*, those people came and met him with olive-branches in their hands: this (as he subjoins) being a badge and sign of friendship among those barbarous people. Whence more probably was this derived, than from the history of the flood, written by *Moses?*

We might here observe what *Ovid* saith concerning *Deucalion* and his wife, viz. That as soon as the deluge ceased, they betook themselves to their devotion, and solemnly worshipped the Gods, which doubtless refers to what the sacred story relates, That *Noah* erected an altar, (the first we read of) to sacrifice to God, and to praise him for his miraculous deliverance from the tremendous deluge. Thus among the Pagans we find unquestionable monuments of the truth of the Bible.

The next remarkable occurrence after the flood to be found in the Pagon records is, the attempt to build the tower of Babel.

Berosus mentions it, but with these additions (if we may call them additions, as they have some kind of ground in the sacred history) that it was built by giants, that those giants were *Terræ Filij*, or *sons of the earth*; that they waged war against the Gods, were at length dispersed; and that the building was beaten down by a wind.

Josephus affirms that the building of the tower of *Babel* is mentioned by *Hestiæus*; and by one of the *Sibyls*; and *Eusebius* testifies that circumstance in his *evangelical preparation*.

The ancient poets turn this fact of the sacred history into the fable of the *Titans*, whom they feigned to have heaped mountains upon mountains to scale Heaven, and combat with the Gods; and by name *Ovid* mentions *Japheth (Japetus)* one of *Noah's* sons, as one of the ringleaders in the preposterous attempt.

Homer tells us, they cast up three hills one upon another, *Osa* on *Olympus*, and shady *Pelion* on *Osa*, hoping thereby to make their way to the Heavens; but the aspiring design was frustrated, and the bold and presumptous invaders were dispersed by the thunder of *Jove*.

Now all this fiction of the giants, both Greek and Latin, was derived from what the Mosaic history relates, *Gen.* xi. 3, &c. That Nimrod, a great hunter, a giant-like man, with his associates attempted to build a city and town to reach up to Heaven, which the Pagans interpreted into a defiance of the Gods, and waging war with them.

It must be confessed, that they spoke hyperbolically, when they said, *Let us build a city and a tower to reach up to Heaven*; for they could not but be sensible of the impracticability of such a work, because they knew the height of the late flood which lifted up the ark fifteen cubits above the highest mountain, was infinitely short of Heaven; nor was it to be a refuge from the waters of another flood; for God had declared, that no such deluge should ever be again, *Gen.* ix. 15. But their design was evidently this, according to the sacred historian, *Gen.* xi. 4. *Let us make a name*, lest we be scattered abroad

abroad *on the face of the whole earth*; that is, " Let us go about this work, " that here we may have an abiding " place, that by erecting this vast " city and tower, we may have room " enough, and live together in one " body, make our lusts our own law, " and act as we please, without the " controul of others; and that after- " wards, when by reason of the in- " creace of our numbers, we must be " compelled to remove, we may be " known [illegible]is famous monument; " and w[illegible]e leave this world, we " may hereby purchase a name in " future ages, and even survive after " death."

Thus their enterprize and design were prophane and impious, and nothing less than an arrogant contempt of the great God and Father of the universe.

Thus though the poets, who ever indulged fancy and fiction, have interspersed this circumstance, as if these daring sinners had actually scaled the Heavens; it must be acknowledged, that it gave rise to their treating on the subject, and in the main confirms the truth of the sacred history.

With respect to the division of the earth among the sons of *Noah*, recorded in the tenth chapter of *Geneſis*, it is not to be doubted, that the fiction of dividing the world among three brethren, the sons of *Saturn*, was taken from this circumstance. Indeed there are some traces and remainders of the sacred truth to be met throughout the whole literary system of the Pagans.

5th, From the time of the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion at Babel, to that of the law being given by *Moſes*, there are many passages attested by Pagan writers. The great Patriarch *Abraham*, according to *Joſephus* and *Euſebius*, is mentioned by divers writers among the Pagans. *Origen* affirms, that *in the Name of the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob*, were words that the Heathen pronounced in their charms and spells; nay he tells us, that those words, *the God of Abraham*, gave occasion to the Pagans to think *Abraham* was some God.

It is likewise observable, that the Pagan writers made mention of the same, or the like custom, that this Patriarch used at making of covenants, viz. the cutting or dividing of one or more animals into two parts, and passing between them.

Thus in *Gen.* xv. 9. when God made a covenant with him, he commanded him to divide a heifer, a goat, and a ram into pieces, and to pass between them; whence afterwards this ceremony was used when a league or covenant was entered into between man and man, and the parties did, as it were, declare by that action, that they wished to be cut asunder in the same manner as the beasts, if they violated the covenant into which they entered.

From divers instances in the Old Testament, of the frequent and visible appearance of God and Angels unto men, as to *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, *Gideon*, *Monoah*, and several others; and from their assuming of bodies in human forms, in order to this purpose;

purpose; there arose a notion among the Pagans, that their gods vouchsafed sometimes to come down and visit them in the likeness of mortals.

Thence *Homer* and other poets commonly mention the apparition of the gods in sensible shapes, and introduce them in that manner. Thence it was that the people of Lystra, in the lesser Asia, cried out, that *the gods were come down to them in the likeneſs of men*, Acts xiv. 12. and upon this apprehension, they were preparing to offer sacrifice to them, and the priests were ready, with their oxen and garlands for that end.

Again, sacrificing of men, especially of their sons, which some Pagan stories relate, might have its original from *Abraham*. It is recorded by *Porphyrius*, (saith *Euſebius*) that *Saturnus* an ancient king of Phænicia, in order to appease the gods, and save his kingdom from impending ruin, offered his only son upon an altar.

The conducting of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their miraculous passage through the Red Sea, together with the overthrow of the Egyptians in it, must have been known to the Pagans, though they would insinuate to the contrary.

The fame of *Moſes* dividing the Red Sea was retained among the Gentiles, as *Diodorus Siculus* testifies in these words: "There is a report "spread among the Ichthyophagi, a "people inhabiting the shore near "the Arabian Gulph, (which is the "name given to the Red Sea, among "geographers) namely, that all the "space where that Gulph is, was "dried up, the waters being driven "back, but that after the bottom "had appeared for some time, the "place by a reflux of the sea, was "reduced to its former condition." Now in this instance he gives a most remarkable testimony to the truth of these words, in *Exodus* xiv. 21. *The Lord cauſed the ſea to go back, and made the ſea dry land, and the waters were divided*, and in *Geneſis* 27 and 28. *The ſea returned to its ſtrength, and the waters covered the hoſt of Pharoah.*

The return of the Israelites from Egypt is attested by *Beroſus*, *Strabo*, and *Juſtin*; the last of these tells us that *Moſes* who led the people out of Egypt, *ſtole from the natives of that country ſome of their ſacred things*, which is evidently grounded on those words we read in *Exodus* xxxi. 21. *They went not out empty, they took with them veſſels of gold and ſilver, and garments.*

It is expressly attested by *Juſtin*, that the Jews travelled into the deserts of Arabia, and that *Moſes* came to Mount Sinai, with other circumstances relating to their travels through that place; all which are authentic evidences of the truth of scripture-history.

6th. The Mosaic ceremonies are confirmed by the very practice of the Pagan world. We shall instance some of the most particular and momentous, as it would be tedious as well as impossible to recount them all, beginning with the dividing of time into *weeks*, or seven days, and the observing a seventh day as sacred.

Hesiod calls it *the seventh holy day*, because among the Gentiles, this was a day of solemn worship, set apart for religious offices. It is observed of *Severus* the Roman emperor, that he used to go to the capital, and frequent the temples on this day, yea the very word *Sabbath* was used by some of them; thus *Suetonius* saith, *Diogenus* the grammarian used to hold disputations at Rhodes on the Sabbath, and from *Lucian* we learn that the seventh day was a festival for school boys; from those and several other instances which we may find in *Clemens Alexandrius* and *Eusebius*, it might be proved that the more solemn services of religion among the Gentiles, and their cessation from work, were on the seventh day of the week: now no wise man will assert that this custom was founded in nature; for no light of reason could dictate this division of days into just seven and no more; therefore it is reasonable to think that the general agreement of the world in this calculation, was derived from the Jews, who were particularly signalized by their observation of the seventh day, which was enjoined them by of God himself, as in *Exod.* xx. 9. *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work, &c.* in other places the institution and observation of this particular day are mentioned: besides, we might have traced the origin of this institution much higher, and found it dated from the very creation, from the beginning of all things, when we read of God's resting the seventh day, *Gen.* ii. 2. and his blessing the seventh day and sanctifying it, ver. 3. from whence without doubt, the custom among several Gentiles of observing some seventh day in the week had its first rise.

Again, the Gentiles took their several *purgations*, *lustrations*, and *purifications* from the Jews, of which the books of *Moses* treat. When the contents of these writings on the practice of the Jewish people came to be known to the Pagans, they soon began to imitate them, and most of the washings and purifyings used by the Jews, came to be part of their religion.

The Jewish Priests washed their hands and feet before they went about their sacred office, before they sacrificed and touched holy things; and they had in the temple *lavers* for that very purpose. Likewise they used *aspersions* or sprinkling towards others, and were enjoined to cleanse and purify them from the defilements which they had contracted. In a word, every thing and person belonging to the Jewish service and worship were hallowed and cleansed by certain ways of purification prescribed by law.

Hence we read of frequent washings, and sprinklings among the Pagans: *Macrobius* assures us, that the Gentile devotionists, whenever they addressed themselves to their gods, whether celestial or infernal, prepared themselves before hand by using of water, more or less: hence it became

came a maxim among them, that all sacred things must be sprinkled with pure water.

Now these rites of washing and purifying bear so near a resemblance to each other, that we cannot but conclude, the Gentiles took them from the Jews, or the Jews from the Gentiles. The latter is by no means probable, because it is unworthy of God, and the religion which he established among the Jews, to imagine that he would take example from the Pagans, and make their religion the standard of that which he gave to his own people; therefore the former is most reasonable; viz. that the Pagans by way of imitation took their ceremonies of washing and purifying from the Jews.

The Gentile custom of offering first fruits and tenths was borrowed from the Jews and the Old Testament. That it was a general practice among the Pagan worshippers to offer their first fruits to some of their deities, is amply testified by *Censorinus*; and that the custom of paying tythes was as general as ancient, might be proved from the respective histories which speak of this matter.

This was a considerable part of the religion of the *Old Romans*, who [as *Plutarch* writes] were wont to bestow a tenth part of the fruits which the earth yielded them, and of other goods and profits, on their sacred feasts, sacrifices, and temples in honour of the gods; but that was not every year, but freely and out of gratitude, not from any compulsive law, but an act of choice and deliberation.

This custom, likewise prevailed among the *Persians*, for *Cyrus* (as *Herodotus* writes) offered tythes to *Jupiter* after a victory obtained. This might easily be proved from other nations; it was become an universal custom to offer the tenths to some deity after a successful exploit, as *Servius* speaks: Now this sacred and religious rite of dedicating just a tenth to their Gods, is no law of nature; though it might put them upon offering part of their increase to those from whom they thought they received the whole, yet this particular *Quota* is no dictate of nature; therefore it must proceed from positive law and particular institution.

Hence we gather that the Pagans derived this rite and custom from the Jews, who were under a law and of tythes by the special command of God, as the scriptures inform us, and thereby receive additional confirmation.

Abstaining from certain kinds of foods among the Jews may have produced the same custom among other nations. The distinction of *clean* and *unclean* meats was derived from the Jews to the Egyptians.

Thus *Herodotus* and *Plutarch* report, that these eat no swine's flesh; yea, that they washed themselves if they did but touch it. It is likewise affirmed, concerning the *Phœnicians*, *Cretans* and *Syrians*, that they abstained from this kind of flesh.

The old *Pythagoreans* abstained from

from several kinds of food; what God tacitly forbade in sacrifices, as the brain and the heart, (for neither of these are commanded to be sacrificed unto God) these were openly forbade at their tables; and they derived from the Hebrews the custom of abstaining from things that died of themselves, or that had blood in them.

In many other instances it might be shewed, that the Pagans derived several rites and ceremonies from the Jews, but let these suffice.

Thus we have taken a cursory view of the Mosaic records, and shewn in divers instances, the derivation of the Gentiles philosophy, principles, practices and customs, from those sacred writings, and consequently have evinced thereby their truth and antiquity.

7th. The Heathens derived the names of their gods sometimes, from the *names* and titles of the one only living and true God.

The Heathens seem to have derived something from what the Jews practised concerning this *Great Tetragrammaton*, which was called by them *Haſhem, the name* emphatically, the *name approyriate to God*, the inexpressible name; for the Jews tell us, that this name which we read Jehovah was pronounced by the High-Priest only, and that but once a year, in the temple, at the feast of propitiation, so that it was not known to the people how it was pronounced. When they met with it in the Bible, instead of it they read *Adonai*, or *Elohim*.

But though they seldom or never speak of it, this did not proceed from their ignorance of the true pronunciation of it, but a reverence and fear of prophaning the word by taking it in their mouths.

The holy scripture itself warrants the pronouncing of this name; for in *Gen.* xxii. 14. *Abraham* calls the place where he would have sacrificed *Iſaac, Jehovah-jireh.*

Now to this practice of the Jews the Heathens seem to refer, when they call him the *unknown God*, and *the God that is not to be named*; and this name of God *(Jehovah)* is found among the Greeks also, although altered and corrupted.

From *Macrobius* we learn, that *Jao* was the chief God of all among the Gentiles, for which he quotes the oracles of *Apolo Clarius: Know this, that the ſupreme God of all is Jao;* a most signal attestation of the truth of *holy writ*, and the *great name* of God contained therein.

8th, The Old Testament hath left some remains of it in the most remote countries in the world, as we learn from the account of travellers. In all these parts there are evident tracts of the history of the Bible.

Maſtinius, in his history of China acquaints us, that the Chinese have records concerning the universal deluge; that in India, the footsteps of the Mosaical doctrine remain among the *Brachmans*, is proved by *Huetius* an ancient divine. The highest mountain of *Zeilan*, an island in the East-Indies, is called by the inhabitants

tants *Adam's Top*, and there is *Adam's Cave*, where he lamented himself after his fall.

The ceremony of putting their hands under one another's thighs, when they solemnly swear to each other, of which we read, *Gen.* xxiv. 2. is observed among some of the Indians at this day.

The Americans have a tradition of the deluge, and mention it in their discourses. The ancient Patriarchs left behind them remembrances of their actions, even in these places; their memory is still preserved and retained in many names, customs and practices, that are among them. The name of Joseph is often there, and Hallelujah is used in their songs.

But let this suffice to prove that the Heathens borrowed from scripture; that their Priests took their religious ceremonies; that their poets took their fables; their historians, their narratives; their philosophers, their opinions; and their people in general their modes and customs, from the writings of the Old Testament, and the doctrines, rites and practices of the Jews therein recorded; So that it is evident, that Pagans bear testimony to the contents of the Old Testament, and the prophane writers attest the truth and authority of those sacred writings.

We now proceed to shew as briefly as possible, how the Scriptures of the New Testament are confirmed by external testimony; that is, how professed Pagans and Jews, enemies to christianity, have asserted the very same things that are related in the evangelical writings.

1st. There prevailed a general report about the time of our Saviour's Birth, and afterwards, that some eminent person or persons should arise out of those eastern nations, and be Lord of the world.

The great politician and statesman Tacitus, asserts this, and would have it fulfilled in Vespasian and Titus, because they were called out of Judea to the empire of Rome.

Suetonius agrees with this author, and tells us, that it was an ancient and constant opinion among the eastern people, that some would come out of Judea about that time, and maintain an universal sway over the world.

Josephus concurs with the Roman authors in this opinion, and informs us, that their was a common rumour among the Jews, that one of their own country should be vested with the universal empire; and with the Roman historian applieth it to Vespasian, because he conquered the Jews, and with Titus came from Judea in triumph to Rome.

Other Jews thought this general notion referred to *Herod*, affirming that he was the person foretold by the prophets, and the expected Messiah. These were the *Herodians* mentioned, *Matt.* xxii. 16.

It is manifest that this fame of an universal Monarch arose from the scriptures of the Old Testament, which frequently speak of a great king and ruler that should come out of the east, and particularly out of Judea.

Out of thee (Bethlehem) shall he come forth unto me, that is, to be

the ruler in Iſrael. This prophecy speaks plainly of a Jew, one that by birth should be of Judea; yea, of Bethelem, and therefore it is falsely applied to those Roman emperors before mentioned, who came not out of Judea, but out of Italy; not from Bethelem, but from Rome.

As for *Herod*, he was not a Jew, but an Idumea: he was not born in Bethelem, but in Ascalon.

But in our blessed Saviour, this prophecy was fully accomplished, he being a Jew by birth, and of the city of David, and constituted by God, a matchless king and governor over his people.

In many other places of scripture this divine person, who was to come to redeem and save mankind, is set forth as a *king*, a *great lord*, and *prince*, one that should bear sway in the world, and wield his sceptre over all nations.

Hence this rumour was spread throughout the east, about the time of our Redeemer's nativity. Hence those Pagan and Jewish writers before-mentioned, speak of this great Ruler and Monarch, who is no other than the *Lord Chriſt, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* This they had from the prophecies of the Bible, whence it is so often foretold, that a king should arise, and gain an universal empire over mankind.

To this we may refer that which *Suetonius* reports (and he quotes his author) that a few months before the birth of *Auguſtus Cæſar*, there prevailed an universal report, *that nature was bringing forth a king to the Roman people.* The senate alarmed at so extraordinary a report, issued as extraordinary a decree, *that no one born that year ſhould be nurtured.*

This report without doubt referred to *Chriſt*, who was born in the reign of *Auguſtus;* he was the king who was to be born to the world, which was then in a manner subject to the Roman empire, and therefore might be called the Roman people.

2d. The *Sibylline* oracles and verses are a signal confirmation of the authority of the New Testament, as in these the chief points relative to our blessed Saviour, are plainly related by these Pagans. They declared in their writings, that there should be a great change in the world, and that *a new governor ſhould ariſe to be very eminent.*

Cicero frequently takes notice of this passage of the *Sibylls*; and the Roman senate was greatly alarmed at it, lest their common-wealth should be turned into a monarchy.

The following affirmation is sufficient to prove the authority of the Sibylline writings. They tell us in their mystic verses, that a *little child* should throw down idolatry with his hand, and stop the mouths of the *Delphic dæmons.* This was no other than the child *Jeſus.*

It is certainly of great importance, that these writings attest the very same things that were predicted in the Old Testament, and are recorded by the Apostles and Evangelists in the New. This circumstance essentially tends to the refutation of the objections and cavils of the most professed adversaries of Christianity.

Accordingly,

Accordingly, the ancient Christians, especially the ancient fathers, made use of these Heathen writings against the Heathens themselves, engaging them with their own weapons. These verses are highly commended by *Athenagoras*, and *Theophilus* of Antioch, *Juſtin*, *Clemens*, *Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Lactantius*, *Auguſtine*, and divers others too tedious to mention.

In short, these writings afford a clear testimony of Christianity, and its divine author. The ancient Christians esteemed them as valid proofs of the truth of their holy religion, and of the New Testament on which it is founded; therefore till these testimonials are refuted, every asserter of the Christian cause has a right to alledge them, as he finds occasion.

3. The New Testament receives ample confirmation from Pagan writers, who attest the name of Christ, together with the particular circumstances relating to his birth, life and death.

Tacitus speaking of the sufferings of the Christians for the firing of Rome, which *Nero* laid to their charge, saith, the emperor inflicted the most exquisite punishments on those persons, who being detestable for their villanies, we commonly called *Chriſtians*, from the author of that name, *Chriſt*, *Taci. Annal*, *b.* 15. *ch.* 44. Here this historian expresly mentions the name of *Chriſt*, who is the person to which he most undoubtedly refers; though as we learn from *Lactantius*, this name was sometimes altered; for that by changing a letter, they pronounced it *Chreſt*. Thus we read in *Suetonius*, that *Claudius* banished the Jews from Rome, because they were always raising tumults, at the instigation of *Chreſtus*.

Pliny the younger mentions the Christians, and Christ by name; for he tells the emperor, that some that were brought before him upon suspicion of being *Chriſtians*, were found to be persons of another persuasion; for, upon his solicitation, they refused not to *curſe Chriſt*. This was the appellation by which he was known to the Gentile historians, and this is the very title by which he is emphatically stiled in the New Testament.

But from the name, we pass on to the great and memorable circumstances which accompanied the birth, life, and death of our blessed Saviour.

With respect to his birth, there are four most remarkable things to be attended to; namely, the particular time of it, the general tax, the wonderful star, and the murdering the infants at Bethlehem.

Those known adversaries of Christianity, the Jews and Gentiles testify that Christ was to come at that *very time* when he came. It was the universally received tradition of *Elias*, that after four thousand years the *Meſſiah* should be born; for though that celebrated prophecy or saying in the *Talmud* of two thousand years before the law, and two thousand after it, be not exactly true (for there were about two thousand five hundred years, from the creation to the

the giving of the law, and from that time, to the coming of Christ, there were not above sixteen hundred years) yet the prophecy may be used to convince the Jews, that the *Meſſiah* is come; and it is a plain indication of the time when he was expected by them, even that time when he blessed the world with his presence on earth.

Hence it is, that when Christ was brought to Jerusalem to be offered in the temple, as soon as *Simeon* beheld him, he immediately acknowledged him, and cryed out, *mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* This is that *Simeon* to whom the Jewish doctors referred when they said, the disciples of *Hillel* shall not fail, till the Messiah cometh; for this *Simeon*, called the *Juſt*, was one of the chief of those disciples.

It is confessed by all the learned Jews, that he was ardently *deſired* and *expected*, not only by that people, but by all nations, just at the time of his coming; for this was the great Lord of the world, that was expected out of the East; this was the fulness of time when the Son of God was born of a woman.

Another circumstance of Christ's birth, which the New Testament takes notice of, is the tax that was made by the appointment of the emperor *Auguſtus*, *It came to paſs in thoſe days (ſaith St. Luke) that there went out a decree from Cæſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed*, or enrolled, as the Greek word properly signifies. This was no money-tax, but only a setting down or enrollment of every person according to quality, age, and station.

The emperor had precedents among the old Roman kings for this; for *Plutarch* tells us that *Numa Pompilius*, and *Florus*, relates, that *Servius Tullius* took an account of the age, family, patrimony and offices of the Romans, digesting them into particular classes, and setting them down in tables kept for that purpose.

Now *Auguſtus*, by such a *cenſus* or estimate as this, knew the strength of his empire, so that when there should be occasion for a subsidy, he could take his measures accordingly. Whence it is said, *all the world was taxed*, or enrolled, it is to be restrained (though not to Judea only, as some imagine, yet) to the Roman empire.

Tacitus, whose authority is unquestionable, giveth this short description of the books of taxes, or enrollment, which were made at the time when Christ was born. "The "public revenues were contained in "them; the number of the citi- "zens, and their dependants, that "were in arms; how many ships, "kingdoms, and provinces there "were within the compass of the "Roman empire, was exactly re- "gistered, and consequently what "taxes or impositions might be dis- "pensed with, and what were ne- "cessary to be levied in the several "parts of the empire."

All this *Auguſtus* copied with his own hand, so that we find the Roman and Jewish histories (for *Joſephus* mentions it) agree with the sacred

sacred one and confirm the relation of St. *Luke* concerning the birth of our Saviour.

The next particular relating to the birth of Christ, was the appearance of a wonderful Star, *Matt.* ii. 2, 7, 9, which is also mentioned by Heathen writers.

Some think this new Star appeared only to the *Magi*, or wise men, alledging as the ground of their opinion, that otherwise *Herod* would not have so *diligently enquired* of them concerning its appearance; because he might have learned that from his own subjects.

But to understand this clearly, let us attend to the words of scripture, *Matt.* ii. 7. *Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently, what time the Star appeared?* that is, either first, what was the time of its usual rising, for it did not appear always night and day: or, secondly, perhaps the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and other Jews, did not observe it, it being not a great and large one; but the *Magi*, who were skilled in the Stars, and observed when a new one appeared, knew the time of its rising; therefore *Herod* enquired of them. Or, thirdly, he enquired what was the time when the Star began first to appear.

That this is the true meaning is evident, from *Matt.* ii. 16, that *Herod slew the children from two years old and under, according to the time which he had enquired.*

Herod had been told by these wise men, that this had appeared about two years; therefore he ordered all children born within that time to be slain. Hence it is evident, that the time of the Star's first appearance was the circumstance about which *Herod* made the enquiry, and in which he could not be satisfied by his own subjects.

But it does not follow from this, that the Star was not seen by them at all, nor by *Herod* himself, because his enquiry was not about the present appearance of it, but only concerning the time of its first appearance. Besides, if it was seen by none but the *Magi*, it would not have been mentioned in the writings of the Pagans; whereas the *Sibylls* in their verses prophetically speak of it, and *Virgil* transcribes the same in praise of the emperor *Auguſtus*.

Again, Herod's murdering the infants of Bethlehem is mentioned by prophane writers, as well as by the Holy Evangelist. *Macrobius* recounts not only the circumstance of Herod's slaying the children of Bethlehem, but his putting to death his own son, and adds farther, that when the news was brought to the emperor of this horrid transaction; he sarcastically replied, *It is better to be* Herod's *hog than ſon.*

Tertullian appeals to the censual tables and public acts at Rome for the truth of this circumstance, which shews that it was well known to those Pagans.

But we pass on to consider some transactions of the life of the blessed *Jeſus*, which are attested by the professed enemies of Christianity. That one *Jeſus* lived in Judea in the time of *Tiberius*, did great and won-

derful things, and was followed by many of the Jews, as well as acknowledged by them to be the *Meſſiah*, sent from God, is not disowned by the greatest adversaries of the Christian religion.

Celſus, *Julian*, and *Porphyry*, deny not the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, as several of the ancient fathers assures us, they confess the matter of fact, that he cured the blind and lame, but they ascribe it to the power of magic. In short they give their assent and testimony to the chief passages of the Evangelical history concerning our Saviour; and though they cavil at some and strive to confute them, they frankly acknowledge, that there was such a person as *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, in the reign of the emperor *Tiberius*, who declared himself to be the *Meſſiah*, and sent from Heaven to redeem and save mankind, and preached those doctrines that are recorded in the gospel, and performed those miraculous works, that are therein related.

This testimony of the Pagans is irrefragable and undeniable; as likewise is that of the Jewish writers, who make frequent mention of *Chriſt*, admit that there was such a person, that he lived at that time in which it is affirmed in scripture he did, and that his works were no less than miraculous, and beyond the power of nature. This the Jews, who lived then, or not long after, report concerning him, as may be seen in the *Talmuds*. *Buxtorf* in his *Talmudic Lexicon* hath produced abundant proofs concerning the matter of fact mentioned in the Evangelical writings, even out of *Talmudic* authors, which is undoubtedly a confirmation of the history of Christ, the true *Meſſiah*.

The death of our blessed Saviour, with some of the particular circumstances attending it is likewise attested by Pagan writers. The great Roman historian *Tacitus*, expressly confirms this Article of our Christian faith, that Christ suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, and that in the reign of *Tiberius*: See his Annals book xv. chap. 44. *Lucian* who was noted for his scoff and ridicule of the Christian religion, calls its great Master and Founder; *The man that was faſtened to a gibbet, and hung upon it in Paleſtine.* The particular manner of his suffering, namely on the cross is acknowledged both by Jews and Pagans, by the former of whom our blessed Lord was called in derision, *he that was hanged.*

The eclipse at Christ's passion, mentioned by the Evangelists, is left upon record also by the Heathens. *Dionyſius* an Athenian by birth, before he was converted to the faith, when he was a student in Egypt, was an eye witness of this miraculous eclipse, which he relates in an epistle, declaring that it was seen not only by himself, but by *Apollophanes*, who was at the same time with him at Heliopolis in Egypt.

They were both greatly astonished concluding some strange event was ready to befall mankind, and *Dionyſius* is said to have cried out, "Either "the God of nature suffers, or the "frame of the world is really to be "dissolved."

" dissolved."---This is that *Dionyſius* who is called the *Areopagite*, *Acts* xvii. 34. because on his return home, he was chosen into the senate of Areopagus, and thence acquired that name; he was afterwards converted to the Christian faith by St. *Paul*.

Origen in a dispute with *Celſus* the philosopher, proves this eclipse at Christ's passion out of *Phlegon Trallianus*, (one of Trajan's freed men) who was a great chronologer, and *Euſebius* mentions the same author, and quotes these words: " In " the fourth year of the 202nd *Olym-* " *piad*, there happened a great de- " fect (or Eclipse) of the Sun, such " as was never known before. The " day at the sixth hour was turned " into dark night, that the stars " appeared in the Heavens," and he adds, " There was an earthquake at " the same time in *Bithynia*, which " overturned several houses in the " city of *Nice*."

What account could be more accurate, as Christ's passion was in the last year of the 202nd Olympiad, which was the 18th year of the reign of *Tiberius?* The hour of the day mentioned by *Phlegon* plainly shews that he relates the same thing with St. *Mark*, who expressly affirms the Eclipse to have happened at the sixth hour, *Mark* xv. 33. Besides the earthquake which attended this eclipse is said by the chronologer to have happened at the very time, which agrees with the account of St. *Matthew's* gospel, chap. xxvii ver. 51. all which proves that this Pagan refers to the very same eclipse mentioned by the Evangelists.

Euſebius cites the very same testimony, which is strongly confirmed by *Origen*. This memorable eclipse could not be natural, because it happened at a time when the moon was full, being on the day before the passover, which fell on the fourteenth day of the first month, called Nisan, (which answers to our March.)

Now as it is contrary to all the rules of astrology, that the Sun should be eclipsed when the Moon is at the full, we must conclude this eclipse to have been miraculous, altogether against the course of nature, and consequently that it was an extraordinary exertion of Almighty power in confirmation of the divinity and mission of the blessed *Jeſus*.

With reſpect to the *earthquake*, it is probable, that like the *eclipſe*, it was universal, though it proved destructive only to some particular places, as in Asia, where according to the account of *Pliny*, whole cities were overturned, to relieve which, *Suetonius* records, that the emperor remitted their tribute. Concerning the earthquake at our Saviour's passion, *Euſebius* quotes the testimony of *Thallus*, and the same is alledged as an authentic witness by *Tertullian* and *Origen*.

The last circumstance attending the death and sufferings of the great Redeemer was, the rending the veil of the temple; this is mentioned by the Evangelists *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, and confirmed by *Joſephus*, whose testimony is as good as can be desired in this case.

4th. Be-

4th. Besides these particular testimonies, there are many general ones to be produced, both of Jews and Pagans in confirmation of the authenticity of the New Testament.

The resurrection of Christ is attested both by Pagan and Jewish witnesses. As other governors and deputies of Roman provinces used to send to the emperor and senate of the most remarkable things that happened in their provinces, so *Pontius Pilate*, procurator of Judea, did the same, and his relation is the more valid, because it is the testimony of the person who condemned our blessed Saviour.

His letter to the emperor *Tiberius*, soon after Christ's death, gives an account of his life, miracles, crucifixion, and rising from the dead; and as public acts were reserved in the imperial archives, so these were kept there, whence *Hegesippus*, an eminent champion in the cause of Christ, made use of them against the Pagans, as we are informed by Eusebius.

Justin Martyr tells the Roman emperors, that an account of the death and sufferings of Christ was to be seen in the acts of or under *Pontius Pilate*, and refers them to the same, as satisfactory and undeniable.

Tertullian, with great confidence alledges, the same records, as a sufficient confirmation of the history of Christ; whereupon a learned prelate concludes, that this ancient father found this among the acts of the Roman senate, where all things of this nature were set down.

Now the crucifixion of our Saviour and his rising again, were certainly very considerable and remarkable passages, and therefore it is not to be doubted, but that *Pilate* as procurator of Judea, sent the emperor an account of them.

Tertullian observes (and from him *Eusebius*) that *Tiberius* would have put Christ into the numbers of the Gods, upon *Pilate's* recounting such marvellous things concerning him: he referred the matter to the senate, desiring them to rank him among those that were worshipped and deified; but the senate refused it, because they themselves did not first order and approve it; for it was an old Roman law, that no God should be set up by the emperor, unless first approved of by the senate, so that this appears to have been the only cause wherefore they rejected Christ from being admitted among the Gods. However the emperor still retained the same reverence and esteem for Christ, and in honour to him, greatly favoured the christians, commanding by edict, that none should accuse or disturb them meerly for their religion, and annexing a severe penalty to the transgression of this edict.

Nay, *Tertullian* and other fathers assure us, that he had so great a reverence for Christ, that he intended to erect a temple to him; and that this arose from the information which *Pilate* sent him concerning our blessed Saviour.

An ancient historian reports, that *Alexander Severus* worshipped our Lord, and held his picture in great veneration, and that he had thoughts of

of erecting a temple to him, and taking him into the number of the gods.

The same writer affirmeth, that *Adrian* intended to have done the same, but was prevented, by being told, that in such case all would turn Christians, and the temples dedicated to the other gods would be forsaken.

Let these then suffice as ample attestations of the Pagans concerning the person and works of our great Redeemer.

On this occasion we cannot pass over in silence, the very remarkable account of *Josephus*, who forty or fifty years after some of the Evangelical writings, hath this memorable passage, book 18. chap. 4. "At "this time, there was one *Jesus*, a "wise man, if I may call him a man, "for he did most wonderful works, "and was a teacher of those, who "received the truth with delight. "He brought many to his persuasion, both of the Jews and Gentiles.

"This was *Christ*, who though "he was, at the instigation of some "of the chief of our nation, and "by *Pilate's* sentence, hung on the "cross; yet those who loved him "at first, did not cease to do so; for "he came to life again the third "day, and appeared to them; the "divine Prophets having foretold "these and other wonders of him; "and to this day there remains a "sort of men, who are now called "from him by the name of Christians."

Both *Eusebius* and *Jerom* alledge this remarkable testimony of *Josephus* concerning Christ (and with much propriety) as an undeniable confirmation of the Christian religion.

The latter of these writers place this Jew among the ecclesiastical writers of the church, because he speaks of our Saviour with such extraordinary respect.

If some accounts are true, which alledge, that *Josephus* had before this written against *Christ*, his testimony is thereby rendered more valid, because it is a greater argument of the invisible power of divine truth, which wrought so wonderful a change in him.

Again, *Josephus* confirms the truth of the Evangelical history, by relating several things concerning persons who are recorded therein. Thus he speaks of the putting *John the Baptist* to death, a man whom he greatly extolls, telling us, book 18. chap. 7. "That he was an excel-"lent man, and stirred up the Jews "to piety and virtue, holiness and "purity, both of body and soul; "and that *Herod* caused him to be "killed, because he feared his au-"thority would hurt him, and oc-"casion a defection among the "people."

The same author makes honourable mention of St. *James*, whom he calls the *brother of Jesus Christ*; and relates his martyrdom, declaring that the taking away his life was so flagitious a sin, that in revenge thereof the Jews were destroyed. He fully agrees with St. *Luke* in mentioning *Herod's* speech to the people,

and their impious flattery, together with the immediate judgment inflicted upon that wicked man, by whose command that Apostle was put to death.

It is true, *Josephus* doth not write that he was eaten of worms, but the same is implied in these words, he *was seized with a sudden pain and disease, and died in great torment of his bowels*, which without doubt were devoured by those *worms St. Luke* speaks of, Acts xii. 23.

Besides these testimonies we might produce some concerning St. *Paul*. The insurrection mentioned, *Acts* xxi. 38, where we read, that the tribune of the people said to St. *Paul*, *Art thou not that Egyptian, who before these days didst raise a tumult, and leadest into the wilderness four thousand men?*

This is the same circumstance, with that mentioned by *Josephus*, more than once, which was begun by an Egyptian, who pretending to be a Prophet, gathered together great numbers of Jews, the issue of which is recorded by this historian, book 20. chap. 6. and a confirmation of what St. *Luke* records with reference to St. *Paul*.

We might also add the inscription on the Athenian altar, taken notice of by St. *Paul*, which wants not the testimony of prophane writers. This is hinted at by *Lucian*, and *Thucydides* affirms, that there were no less than twelve altars erected in the market-place of Athens, with this inscription, *To the unknown God*.

But let us pass on another historical matter, recorded in the sacred writings, viz. The *universal famine* foretold by *Agabus*, *Acts* xi. 28. which according to Pagan historians, precisely happened in the fourth year of the reign of *Claudius Cæsar*, and spread throughout the world in the sixth year.

Dion Cassuis, who compiled his history out of the Fasti of Rome, through the several years, speaks of this famine under that emperor, and mentioneth his great care of the city, that the inhabitants might not be starved.

Suetonius also commends him for his diligence and forecast in furnishing the city with provision.

Josephus likewise mentions this grievous famine in the days of *Claudius* with the same particular circumstances, which agree with the account delivered by St. *Luke*, concerning the relief which was sent at that time by the Disciples at Antioch, to the brethren in Judea, that being a place where the famine raged exceedingly.

Thus we find the affirmation of *Eusebius* to be true, who speaking of the dreadful famine, recorded in the *Acts*, telleth us, that even those writers, who were averse to the Christian religion, have recounted the same in the histories.

5th. The history of the New Testament, or the gospel dispensation in general, receives confirmation from the account related by a professed Heathen, concerning the followers of Christ, in the age following, that which he appeared on earth.

Pliny the younger, writing to *Trajan*,

jan, book 10. Epist. 97. gives an account of the religion and practice of these persons; for, being proconsul of Bithynia, in that emperor's time, and strictly enjoined by him to inspect the carriage of the christians, he was particularly careful to inform himself of the same, in order to fulfil his master's command and desire.

Accordingly he particularly relates how amazingly that religion spread, and increased daily in that Province, and that not only great and populous cities, but even towns and villages abounded with its professors, and that in proportion to its prevalence, the Pagan's worship decreased.

He testifies the resolution and constancy of the christians in their profession; observing that he had some persons brought before him for examination, who were accused of being followers of Christ; but that he soon discovered they were no christians, for on the most distant hint of obtaining their dismission, they were ready to adore the emperor's image, and even to curse Christ himself, which was a sufficient evidence to him that they were not christians indeed; for he had been informed that persons of that character could not by any means be brought to renounce their religion, in which they were stedfast and immoveable.

He likewise gives an account of the nature of their public confessions, of the devotion with which they served God, and also that they worshipped Christ as such.

The testimony of *Pliny* is confirmed by the answer of the emperor Trajan, in consequence of this representation, wherein he expresseth it as his will and pleasure, that these persons called christians should be no longer under the inquisition; that is, that they should not be sought for and punished, as he was satisfied of their moral character; and that nothing could be alledged to their charge deserving of death.

From this character and account which were given at the beginning of the second century, by the emperor Trajan, and by Pliny, who had personal knowledge of the christians, we may infer, that they were at first, according to the description of the Gospel, *holy in all manner of converſation*; that their religion increased and flourished; that all the severities which were practised upon them, could not draw them from a steadfast profession of the Gospel of Christ, and consequently may assure ourselves, that the history of the New Testament, describes them in their real colours, or in other words, relates a faithful and circumstantial account of christianity.

6. We shall conclude with the testimony of that arch-infidel *Mahomet*, who in the express terms of the Alcoran, adds to other proofs of the authenticity of the scriptures of the New Testament. The words are these, "The spirit of God hath given "testimony to Christ, the son of "*Mary*, a divine soul was put into "him. He is the messenger of the "spirit of the word of God. His "doctrine is perfect, &c. Again the "Gospel

" Gospel is called the light and con-
" firmation of truth, and the right
" way to fear God."

The Alcoran likewise represents the Great Jehovah as speaking in terms to this import; " That he had " sent Christ, the Son of Mary, that " he had given the Gospel to no " other end, than they might obtain " by it the love and grace of God."

In other places the miracles of our Saviour are owned and confessed to be true.

Thus even the great impostor, and enemy to christianity, bears witness to the blessed Jesus, and in some degree acknowledgeth the authenticity of the Gospel.

CHAP. XIII.

Summary view of the teſtimonies cited in vindication of the New Teſtament. A remarkable objection, impartially ſtated, and fully anſwered.

IN order to strenghten the christian cause, and build up sincere christians in their most holy faith, we have turned over many volumes of professed adversaries, who approve of the chief things related in those sacred writings. The following is a brief account of the writers both Jewish and Pagan, who concur in the confirmation of the grand point, we have laboured to established.

Among the Jews, we have *Philo*, an excellent platonist of *Alexandria*, who flourished soon after Christ, and lived at the time of the Apostles.

We have Josephus, a Jewish historian, according to some a Priest, who wrote about forty years after, and had great opportunities of acquainting himself with the christian, as well as the Jewish affairs.

We have the Talmudic doctors and writers, some of whom lived near those times, and give their assent to the matters of fact recorded in the gospel.

Among Pagans, we have their emperors, *Auguſtus, Tiberius, Caius, Caligula, Trajan, Adrian, Alexander Severus*; likewise their deputy officers, *Lentulus, Pilate, Pliny.*

We have their celebrated historians, philosophers, and their most renowned scholars, as *Pliny*, the proconsul of Asia, in his epistle. *Cornelius Tacitus*, an eminent Roman orator and historian, in his books of history and annals. *Plutarch*, a famous biographer, in several of his treatises. *Lucian*, in his dialogues. *Suetonius*, in the lives of the *Cæſars, Juſtin, and Dion. Caſſuis*, in his Roman history.

We have besides all these, four inveterate enemies to christianity, *Julian, Celſus, Phorphyrius*, and *Hierocles*, whose writings attest the truth of many things recorded in the New Testament.

We have *Macrobius* (if he may be deemed an Heathen author) in his *Saturnalia*, and *Lampridius*, in his lives of the emperors.

We have their women also, the *Sibylls*, whose testimony concerning Christ is by no means contemptible.

Lastly, We have not only the joint testimony of Jews and Gentiles,

tiles, but of *Mahomet* himself. In a word, we have all the witnesses that can be desired or expected; and all the evidence and proof that can be derived from time, place and circumstance.

But as blindness of heart and obstinacy of temper, will not admit of the fullest demonstration, and clearest evidence, after all that has been offered, there remains one objection, and the only one that we think can be started; it is this: *Though the remarkable paſſages already mentioned in the New Teſtament, are related by Jewiſh and Pagan hiſtorians, yet there are others as remarkable omitted by the ſame writers; conſequently as they concur not in all, this teſtimony cannot be deemed upon the whole as valid.* In answer to this formidable objection, we offer the following considerations.

1st. From a short space after Christ's nativity, to the eighth year of his age, there could be no history expected concerning him, because he was all that time in *Egypt*, therefore nothing is recorded of him during the same by the Evangelists, and if they are silent, we can expect no account from the historians.

When he returned to Judea, he lived retire till he was thirty years old; it is only recorded, that he went to Jerusalem with his parents, and disputed in the temple with the doctors; soon after which he came home to *Nazareth*, and there lived in obscurity; therefore there was no subject for history thus far.

After this time, he was employed but three years and a half in the scene of public action, so that it is no matter of wonder that the Jewish and Pagan writers say so little of our Saviour and the transactions of his life, when so great a part of it was spent in obscurity.

2d. It must be remembered, that there are many considerable things and persons, of which some of the circumstances before mentioned, are not related by them.

The obscurity of the sun, at *Julius Cæſar's* death, is not recorded by any but *Ovid*, *Virgil*, and *Pliny*, yet ten historians, or more, in the next age, wrote Cæsar's life, gave an account of his fatal end, and of several things that followed.

Suetonius wrote the lives of the first twelve Roman emperor's; yet if we compare him with other authors, we shall find that he has omitted many considerable things. Let us now apply this to our present purpose; supposing none of the Heathen historians, who have related the Roman acts, had spoken of that famous *Cenſus* or tax in the time of Augustus. Admitting that the eclipse at Christ's passion had not been taken notice of (though both circumstances are upon Pagan record) yet it would not have followed from thence that no such things had happened, for we find it not unusual with historians to pass by some persons and things which are very remarkable and worthy of record.

If then some things spoken by the Evangelists are not mentioned in other histories, we cannot with any

reason thence conclude, that the Evangelists have recorded what is false.

Tacitus, *Valerius Maximus*, and others, have circumstances which are not to be found, but in their respective writings, and yet they are not suspected of falshood; why then may we not credit those things which the New Testament records, though they are not mentioned by any Pagan historians?

It has already been observed of the Evangelical historians themselves, that they do not all record the same things. Thus the Gospels speak of the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, of the *Galileans* and *Herodians*, and yet make no mention of the *Eſſenes*, who were a very considerable ſect.

No history, sacred or prophane, relates every thing; the Evangelists themselves pretend not to this; we must not expect to find every transaction of the blessed *Jeſus* in their writings: for one of them, who wrote last of all, thus finishes h s Gospel, *There are many other things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the world itſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written*, John, xxi. 25.

3d. We are to note, that both Jewish and Pagan historians concealed or misrepresented some things out of design.

We read in Philo and Josephus, the character of the Essenes, that they were devout, industrious, benevolent, and, in every respect, worthy persons; nor is this representation partial, there undoubtedly were such people as Jewish Essenes, and Josephus supposes them to be one of the three sects of philosophers among the Jews. But it is more than probable, that this excellent character, or all of it at least belongs not to these, but to the Christians of Alexandria at that time.

Philo writes of the treatise on a *contemplative life*, when he pretends to describe the Essenes, writes in praise of those Christians converted from Judaism, who were under the tuition and conduct of St. Mark, bishop of Alexandria; for this Evangelist, preaching the Gospel in Egypt, settled a church in that place.

Eusebius is of opinion, that what Philo writes of the Essenes is to be understood of those primitive Christians, who were under the discipline of St. Mark.

Epiphanius and Chrysostom were of the same opinion, as indeed were most of the fathers.

Now the Jewish writers, for politic ends, would not give this account of the Essenes or Christians, but as Jews, that the credit of it might not redound to christianity, but to their own religion, and way of worship.

Pagan historians, as well as Jewish, omit some things from design, and insert others that are palpably false.

Thus, as hath been well observed, Pliny, the natural historian could not be ignorant of the eclipse at Christ's passion, it being recorded in the Roman archives, and he being a diligent searcher into those acts; but he would not insert an event in his

his history which he knew princes were desirous should be concealed. To have mentioned that prodigy might exalt the religion of Jesus too much, and the eclipse might make it shine the brighter, and be more admired and revered by the world. For this reason it is highly probable the Heathen writers neglected to record this prodigy, as it tended to enhance a religion so opposite to their own.

But we shall add another very remarkable instance of the partiality and mispresentation of Pagan writers; when the army of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* were streightened for water, they were suddenly supplied with rain, while their enemies were overwhelmed with hail and thunder. *Dion, Julius Capitolinus, Claudian,* and *Lampridius* mention this circumstanoe, but impute it to the emperor's own prayers to *Jupiter*, and the inchantments of the *Jewish* magicians.

But the plain truth is, that the christian soldiers by their prayers procured this extraordinary and unexpected rain for the relief of their thirst, and brought thunder and storms upon their enemies. The relating of this would have reflected too great an honour upon the christians, and there masters, wherefore the Pagan historians, would not ascribe the wonder to their prayers, but to those of the emperor, telling us the very words he used.

But even these enemies to christianity have not wholly concealed the truth, for they acknowledge this extraordinary event, which they impute partly to the inchantments of Jewish magicians. All who are conversant with this branch of history, know that it is common with Pagan writers to mistake *Jews for Christians*; so the Jewish magicians here are no other than the Christians in the army, who because they brought to pass such wonderful things, are said to have been inchanters and magicians.

These pious Christians were employed in the expedition against the *Germans* and *Samaritans*, and when the army was ready to perish with thirst, obtained by their effectual prayers a great shower of rain for themselves, and a destructive thunder and lightening on the enemy's camp, and thereby procured the victory, whence the emperor acquired the titles of Germanicus and Sarmaticus. This is alledged in the cause of christianity by Apollinaris in his apology to the emperor, as Eusebius testifies.

This is mentioned by Tertullian as a thing every where known, in his apology to the senate, and he affirms that the emperor's own letter sent them out of Germany, acknowledged the same, *viz.* that God wrought a miracle for the sake of the Christians who were in his army, and, that he owed the victory entirely to their addresses to Heaven.

Eusebius observes farther, that the emperor hereupon recalled his edicts against the Christians, and by a new decree appointed a severe punishment to be inflicted on their accusers. The Gentile historians omit this circumstance, and will not impute this

this miraculous event to the interposition of divine Providence in the behalf of the Christians. A victory gained by the prayers of Christians would have been too signal a testimony of the truth and prevalence of Christianity, therefore it is suppressed.

For the same reason, we may justly conclude, Christ's miracles are omitted in Pagan history, for by recording these, they would enforce Christianity and invalidate their own principles. Besides, some of them were afraid to own the miracles of *Jesus* and his followers, because these men were persecuted and put to death; or where this was not the case; they feared to incur the displeasure of the great and powerful.

Thus when it was reported by the Sibylline Oracle, the year before the birth of *Christ*, that *nature did then bring forth a king into the world*, the Roman senate thereupon ordered that no child born that year should be brought up, as appears in *Suetonius*.

Now this was sufficient to check the Roman historians, so that it is not to be wondered, that the killing of the children at Bethlehem by *Herod's* command is not mentioned by any but the Evangelists, (*Macrobius* excepted) as that act carried with it the authority of an edict of the Roman senate.

4thly, It must be considered, that the Christian religion and the professors of it were generally deemed by prophane writers as very contemptible, so that some of these scorned to record those things which had any relation to them.

Hence it is, that the miracles of Christ, and other things appertaining to Christianity, are not so much as mentioned. They could not vouchsafe to record such despicable subjects, which some of them accounted as meerly fabulous. For this cause, it cannot be expected that the Roman history should contain the particulars of the Christian, unless when war and tumults supposed to be caused by them, occasioned those writers to mention some circumstances to the aggrandizement of the Roman name.

5thly, Prejudice, hatred, and malice, may be assigned as just causes, wherefore some of the most remarkable passages in the Evangelical history are not mentioned by Pagan or Jewish writers. It is not to be wondered that *Valerius Maximus*, who collected the memorable acts of other nations as well as of Rome, and dedicated them to *Tiberius*, hath omitted both the Jewish and Christian acts.

His aversion to the Christian religion may solve this point, unless it be supposed that Christianity was in its infancy at the time when he wrote, and therefore that he had not materials for compiling that part of history. But this cannot be said of *Tacitus*, who lived in the next age, and was an enemy to the Christians, as appeared from his severity towards them in his writings, so that he cannot be thought to have been prejudiced in their favour.

Suetonius

Suetonius was bitter in his invectives against them, and therefore no impartial account can be expected from him. The same may be said of *Lucius* and *Pliny*, who though they deliver some truths (and those not inconsiderable ones) concerning the Christians, yet their aversion to them and their religion would not permit them to speak what they knew concerning them.

Plutarch, of all that lived and wrote about that time was the most candid to the Christian religion, which inclined *Theodoret* to think he was almost a Christian; but the rest had such an aversion to the Christians, that their very name was odious to them, hence when they speak of Christians or Christianity they never fail to misrepresent or calumniate both.

Christians by them are described as superstitious, flagitious, and profligate, nay, as diabolical and the most execrable people under Heaven. It is not then to be wondered that such have misrepresented many passages which relate to the profession of Christianity, and falsified all reports concerning them.

This therefore is one grand and principal reason, why Pagans are defective in their historical accounts, and why many things spoken of by the Evangelists, are not mentioned by them or vilely misrepresented. This is undoubtedly the cause why so few of the transactions of the blessed *Jesus* are noticed, and why those that are, are so miserably perverted. Prejudice and envy, spleen, and malice, are the source of all the injuries, which these writers may have done to the Christian cause.

6thly, We may add, that according to the testimony of many learned men, divers pieces of history are lost, whence it is that many occurrences with which we meet in the history of the Gospel, are not to be found in the writings of the Pagans. The stupendous acts of our blessed Lord, and the important transactions of the age in which he was born are not to be found upon record.

All *Dion's* history, for the space of ten years, that is five years before the birth of Christ, and five after it, are lost, as is *Livy's* history of that time. In vain therefore do we search for the remarkable circumstance relative to Christ's birth in those writers.

Lastly, Let it be observed, that there are two of the most celebrated Roman historians, from whom we can expect nothing that has relation to Christ's birth, or the great occurrences that happened about that time. These are *Livy* and *Tacitus*, the former wrote but to the beginning of the reign of *Augustus*, which was before Christ, for which reason no man can reasonably think, that those extraordinary concomitants of our Saviour's nativity, as the *general taxation*, and the appearance of the Star could be recorded by this historian.

With respect to *Tacitus*, there is little reason to expect many circumstances in his writings, we only find him like other of the Heathens, abusing Christ and his Disciples in the most virulent manner. His annals begin with *Tiberius*, and continue to

the death of *Nero*; and his books of history begin where his annals end, and proceed to the conclusion of *Titus Vespasian's* expedition against the Jews.

Florus is but an abbreviator of *Livy*, and therefore we can look for nothing there. As for *Justin*, who flourished in the time of *Antoninus Pius*, he was only an epitomizer of *Trogus Pompeius*, and goes no farther than he went, only that like *Tacitus*, he pours out the most unmerited abuse both on the Jews and Christians.

Thus we see what we may reasonably expect from these historians, and thus we may derive ample reason, wherefore so few things that refer to the history of the Gospel are recorded in Pagan writers. But all that can be reasonably expected is recorded, as we have shewn before, by the best historians among the Pagans.

These are the several considerations which we undertook to offer, and we presume they will fully satisfy the scruples, and answer the objections, that have been or may be started, as well as abundantly prove, that we have a sufficient testimony from Pagan and Jewish writers concerning the Gospel history. This proposition is evident, that the New Testament is confirmed by prophane writers, and that the ecclesiastical records are attested by the authority even of those *who were without*. These have transmitted to us many of those things which are registered by the holy Evangelists, and the memoirs of these things are in prophane history, in the wri those men that opposed the Christian religion.

Thus we have finished what we proposed, which was, to prove the truth and authority of the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, from the evidence and attestation of strangers and enemies. We have endeavoured to shew that the confession of our adversaries agree with that of our best friends. We appeal both to the Jews and Gentiles, that these bear witness to the sacred writings, and their witness cannot be rejected by any reasonable person, because a testimony is least to be suspected when it comes from an enemy, yea rather because such a testimony is reputed firm and solid, worthy of being believed, and deemed valid for the confirmation and establishment of the truth.

This then renders the books of the Old and New Testament worthy of all acceptation, viz. that they are vouched by professed adversaries, which is the great point we have been urging, that Jews and Pagans testify the same things which the inspired writers deliver.

This is a powerful confirmation of the truth of these holy books, this is a clear demonstration that they are not forged, but that the subjects contained in them are real and certain, that they give a just and faithful account of the things on which they treat; in short, that they are the word of God, and indicted by the Spirit of truth.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Summary of Christian Theology. General Rules to be observed in the explaining of Scripture. Practical Improvement of the important Subject.

CHRISTIAN Theology or Divinity, is the science which, from Revelation, teacheth the knowledge of God, namely, his nature and perfection, his relation to us, his ways and dispensations, his will with respect to our actions, and his purposes with respect to our being, in order to form in our minds right principles for our direction and comfort, and to prepare us for the everlasting participation of those blessings which alone can satisfy the desire of the immortal soul.

In natural religion we take our proofs from the nature of things as perceived, considered and compared by the human mind; but now we advance upon the authority and sense of writings and books, viz. the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, acknowledged by the whole Christian world, as a true revelation from God, and as a standard of truth and doctrine.

That God should reveal to us, by such ways as he in his wisdom judged most proper, such things as are needful for us to know and do, for the improvement and happiness of our nature, is perfectly agreeable to his wisdom and goodness, who is our Father, and delighteth in our well-being; and is also perfectly suitable to our circumstances, as mankind are ignorant and weak, and very liable to error and deception.

It is agreeable to the nature of things, that a Father should instruct his child; and that persons of knowledge and learning should teach the ignorant. How much more then, that God, whose understanding is infinite, whose wisdom surpasses the comprehension of finite minds, and without whom we can know nothing at all, should teach and instruct the children of men.

That his instructions should be consigned to writing, is also very necessary; as this, in fact, is the surest method of preserving them in the world.

Tradition from generation to generation, is no false method of conveyance; the experiment hath been sufficiently tried in the ages before the flood; wherein, though tradition was then greatly favoured by the longevity of mankind, yet we find that both the religion of nature, and traditionary revelation, were so far lost, that in the space of one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years, *the earth was filled with violence*; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth; and both would have been entirely lost, had not God in an extraordinary manner interposed.

The benefit of revelation is very great; but then it must be faithfully used, otherwise it will be turned against itself, and made the patron of falshood and delusion, which in fact hath

hath been the case; men either weak or wicked, have perverted it, and reduced it to a subservency either to their lusts or pre-conceived opinions.

The latter was remarkably the case in the first ages of christianity; when any of the philosophers were converted to the Christian profession, they generally brought with them schemes and notions of the particular sects to which they were attached; these influenced their minds in the study of the scriptures, and inclined them to wrest the sacred writings into a consistency with their pre-conceived opinions.

Hence it is that many notions inconsistent with the word of God, and with each other, have been handed down to us from the earliest times, under the sacred character of sound christian doctrine.

In these our days we find men pleading the authority of scripture for a variety of opposite and contradicting sentiments, which therefore cannot all of them be founded on scripture; For the Holy Scriptures being a revelation from God, the most perfect and unvariable standard of truth, though written by different persons, living in remote ages, during the space, as before observed, of fifteen hundred years, from *Moses* to *John*, who wrote the revelation from God, must be perfectly consistent in all their parts and principles, views and sentiments, expressed in uniformity of language; for if the language were multiform and various, the sense would necessarily be obscure, and the understanding confounded, and so the end of revelation would be defeated.

But on the other hand, if, notwithstanding the great changes in customs, dispositions, interest, and religious sentiments, which must, and actually did happen in so long a time, we do find that one consistent scheme, in one consistent uniform language, is carried on in all the writings which compose the scriptures, we may strongly conclude that they are a revelation from God; not the produce of human wisdom, which could never in ages so remote, and far the greatest part so illiterate, have continued to carry on a regular, uniform scheme of religious principles and sentiments in the same language or modes of expression, but the inspiration or dictates of one spirit, the spirit of God. Hence it follows.

First, That in explaining the scriptures, consistency of sense and principles ought to be supported in all the several parts thereof; and that if any part be so interpreted as to clash with any other, we may be sure such interpretation cannot be justified. Nor can any errors be rectified, but by faithfully comparing scripture with scripture, and bringing what may seem to be obscure into consistency with what is plain and evident.

2d. The sense of scripture can no otherwise be understood than by understanding the force and import of scriptural language; and the force and import of scriptural language can be settled in no method more authentic than

than by collecting the several passages in which any phrase or expression occurs. Thus in every view, scripture is the best interpreter of scripture.

3d. Figurative expressions should be carefully distinguished from those that are literal, and it should be always remembered, that the oriental, and consequently the scriptural tropes and figures, are very bold and different from the European.

4th. Single sentences are not to be detached from the places where they stand, but to be taken in connection with the whole discourse. The occasion, coherence and connection of the writing, the argument that is carrying on, and the scope and intent of the paragraph, are to be carefully attended to.

5th. We should always interpret scripture in a sense consistent with the laws of natural religion; or, in other words, with the known perfections of God, and the notions of right and wrong, good and evil, which are discoverable in the works of creation, and in the present constitution of things. The language of nature is most certainly the language of God, the sole author of nature; and however the divine wisdom may diversify the circumstances of supernatural revelation, yet the law of nature, as it is founded on the unchangeable nature of things, must be the basis and groundwork of every constitution of religion which God hath erected. Whence it follows, that the study and knowledge of natural religion is a necessary introduction to the study and right understanding of revelation.

But here let it be observed, we would not by any means insinuate, that the law or religion of nature is commensurate to revelation; or that nothing is to be admitted in revelation, but what is discoverable by the light of nature, or by human reason; so far from that, that the whole of revelation, properly so called, could never have been discovered by human reason.

From hence it follows, that in matters of pure revelation, it is a very false and fallacious way to begin first with what our reason may dictate and discover; because our reason, unassisted by revelation, in such cases can discover nothing at all.

For instance, the consequence of *Adam's* transgression upon his posterity; the covenant made with *Abraham*; the nature and mission of the Son of God; the grant of blessings and of eternal life through him, concerning these things, we could have known nothing of, had not God revealed them to us.

Now therefore, in such matters of pure revelation, the first thing we have to do, is to enquire, not what human reason can discover, but what God has discovered, and declared in scripture; though at the same time it is true, that God has discovered nothing in scripture inconsistent with what he has discovered in the nature of things exposed to the view of all mankind; therefore, if we understand any thing in revealed religion,

gion, in a sense contradictory to natural religion, or to the known perfections of God, and the common notions of good and evil, which he hath written upon all our hearts, we may be certain we are in an error, and mistake the sense of revelation.

6th. He who would effectually study the word of God, ought, above all things, to be deeply sensible of the infinite value of true knowledge and wisdom; and how absolutely necessary it is to his eternal happiness, to cultivate and improve his intellectual powers, in the use of all those means which God hath put into his hands.

The scriptures are given us, not for amusement or meer speculation, like perusing the curious remains of antiquity, the language, manners, and theology of some celebrated ancients; but they are all, from the beginning to the end, pointed directly at our hearts and lives, to make us wise unto salvation. There we find every rule of the most consummate wisdom, and every principle of truth and comfort; the whole is designed to refine our nature into its proper excellence; to guide us into the paths of purity, peace and righteousness; to make us happy in ourselves, and a blessing to all about us, and finally, to qualify us for the full enjoyment of God for ever.

But if we are cold and indifferent to any attainments in true wisdom; if we chuse to trifle away the important season of life, despising the glorious advantages we enjoy, while we eagerly pursue the low and transitory things of this world, in neglect of ourselves, of God, and immortality, of all that is truly great and good, we shall receive little or no advantage from any explication of the Holy Scriptures. In such case, unless we value or relish them, we can have no ground to expect the divine blessing to assist our studies, but have reason to fear we shall be left to ourselves to wander from God, from truth and light, in deplorable ignorance and folly.

Attend therefore to the voice of divine wisdom, *Prov.* ii. 1. *&c. My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee and apply thine heart unto understanding; if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding* (as we do for those things which we most of all desire, and most of all stand in need of;) *if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasure* (as covetous men seek money, and ransack the whole world for the treasure in which they delight;) *then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*, which of all understanding is infinitely the most excellent.

7th. But this sense of the value of divine knowledge, and this desire to obtain it, must be understood in a connection with a sincere endeavour to live agreeable to it; for should a person, under the greatest advantage of learning, and with the utmost assiduity, study the scriptures, he will be after all, but a poor proficient in divine knowledge, if he brings it not home to his heart, and reduces it not to practice.

It is not speculation, but practice and

and experience, which render a man truly wise and knowing, he is the man who livees wisely and virtuously. *If ye continue in my word* (saith our Lord, John viii. 31.) *then ſhall ye know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free* (from the darkness of ignorance and error, and the ſervitude of abſurd luſts and paſſions.) *Job.* vii. 7. *If any man will do his* (God's) *will*, he ſhall know of the *doctrine whether it be of God;* that is, he ſhall ſee it with true light, and be convinced that it is perfectly divine; for *Pſalm* xxv. 14. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant.*

This may ſuffice to make us ſenſible, that a ſincere deſire of true knowledge is a neceſſary diſpoſition for entering upon the ſtudy of the Scriptures, and that obedience to God's command, in the courſe of a pious life, is neceſſary to enlarge and eſtabliſh the judgment in the knowledge of divine truths.

8. To the effectual ſtudy of Scripture, it is neceſſary that our minds and hearts be unbiaſſed, unprejudiced, open to the truth, and always diſpoſed to diſcern and receive it.

If the mind is under the power of prepoſſeſſion and prejudice, we cannot be well diſpoſed for ſearching the Scriptures. For inſtance, if a perſon in matters of religion and conſcience is ambitious to gain reputation in the world, or ſolicitous to please and recommend himſelf to a party; how ſhould he ſtudy the word of God with the ſincere and ſingle view of diſcovering and embracing the truth, when all his care is to find what will please his fellow-creatures, and ſuit his own mean and ſelfiſh purpoſes? *John* v. 44. *How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?* That is, whoſe ruling principle is the deſire of temporal honour, and the favour of men, who ſeek not the honour of God alone, the honour of a good conſcience, and of an upright conduct?

Likewiſe, if we reſign our reaſon and conſcience implicitely to human deciſions, or imbibe the bigotry of a party, or an invincible attachment to any ſyſtem, without conſidering or examining how far they are agreeable to the word of God, we are no longer at liberty to diſcover the truth.

It is owing to this malignant cauſe that great numbers of learned men, who call themſelves Chriſtians, will not allow themſelves to make any enquiry, whether the worſhip of Saints, images, relicks, bread, and innumerable other abſurd doctrines and ſuperſtitious practices, are agreeable to the truth and purity of the Chriſtian religion.

The error and iniquity of this conduct in papiſts we ſee and deteſt; but the ſame moral cauſe will, in all caſes, produce the ſame effects. If we act upon the ſame principles, if we indulge the ſame prejudices, and in the ſame manner wilfully ſhut our eyes, we ſhall be more faulty than papiſts, because it is abſolutely repugnant to our profeſſion as proteſtants, and ſhall be equally incapable

of

of seeing the truth and glory of our holy religion.

In studying the Scriptures we should always keep our minds open to evidence, and further discoveries of truth, which is the only way to be more and more solidly established in our religious principles; for in no other way can we *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Lastly. Devout and fervent prayer to God, the Father of lights, the fountain of all illumination, the adorable being, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, is essentially necessary to the successful study of the Scriptures. *Prov.* ii. 6. *The Lord giveth wiſdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge, and underſtanding.*

Nor hath he appointed any means, how excellent soever in themselves, which exempt us from a dependence on his blessing. All our springs are in him, and his gracious influence renders our endeavours successful; therefore when we apply ourselves to the study of the holy Scriptures, we should make our supplications to God, that he would *open our eyes, that we may behold wonderous things out of his law,* or, in the Apostle's words, *Eph.* i. 17, 18, *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, would give unto us the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of our uuderſtanding, being enlightened,* we may have just apprehensions of the riches of his wisdom and grace, and that our hearts may be duly impressed with a deep and lasting sense of them.

Thus shall we grow from strength to strength, and from grace to grace, till we shall be prepared for that glory which is to be revealed hereafter.

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT

On the foregoing Important Subject.

HAVING thus descanted at large on the Scriptures in general, and laid down such a system of divinity as appears to us founded on the infallible word of God, we would now, by way of conclusion, endeavour to point out the best improvement of this interesting subject.

1st. From the excellence and importance of the Scriptures, we may infer our obligation to be thankful for them. As our natural light and faculties demand our gratitude and thanks, that God has made us wiser than the fowls of Heaven, and taught us more than the beasts of the earth, and as our joy and praise will be agreeable to our illumination, when in God's heavenly light we shall see glorious and eternal light; so the superior instructions and discoveries of revelation challenge our sincere thanks to our wise and beneficent Father, who has employed his Spirit at sundry times and in divers manners, to pour knowledge and light into the darkness of the nations, which otherwise would in effect have been absorbed in darkness and ignorance; and that at length he has visited us with the day-spring from on high, even a full display of his heavenly grace in the everlasting Gospel.

2d. We should maintain a just, that is to say, the very highest esteem for the word of God, as contained in the Scriptures.

If it is true, *That all Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and inſtruction in righteouſneſs,* then certainly we cannot prize it too highly.

The things of this world, which are very imperfect and transitory, possesses, alas! too large a share of our hearts; but the Holy Scriptures are a treasure of heavenly and everlasting riches, and it is but reasonable we should give them the preference, to what we know is infinitely superior in point of worth and excellence. Upon this foundation of their value and importance, the wisest and best of men have represented them as the highest object of our delight and esteem. *Pſ.* xix. 7,---10. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul; the teſtimony of the Lord is*

ſure, making wiſe the ſimple. The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: more to be deſired are they than gold; ſweeter alſo than honey and the honey-comb. Then only can we call ourselves happy, when we have attained the same opinion of, and delight in, the good word of God.

3d. We must not on any account allow ourselves to think with indifference of the divine word, so as to treat it with irreverence. The worth and infinite importance of revelation will not admit of a cool and languid thought; it is too sacred and divine to allow any degree of contempt. It is with some, deemed an instance of wit and humour to introduce Scripture phrases in common conversation, and to provoke mirth, by quoting the Bible. But surely this is a most scandalous practice, and nothing less than burlesquing the word of God, and raising a laugh at the expence of the greatest blessing of Heaven.

Such prophane levity will by degrees lessen the reverence we have for the word of God, and destroy all serious regard to it; which is, in effect, to destroy ourselves; and therefore should not only be carefully avoided, but be detested with the utmost abhorrence. To preserve our respect for the word of God we should,

4thly, Guard our minds against deism, on the one hand, and popery on the other.

The deist will persuade you, revelation is unnecessary, and consequently, that the scripture is no revelation from God, but a cheat, at first invented, and afterwards supported by those who find their account in it. He racks his invention to start any difficulty or objection, to prove that the Bible is not sufficient to the purposes of revelation.

Here indeed the Romanist joins him, though they proceed by different measures; the former, as he pretends to the meer religion of nature, and the latter to the authority of the church, and a living infallible guide upon earth.

Both these start from the same point, and it is much to be feared they will meet and unite again in process of time; for where deistical principles prevail in a family, the rising generation must grow up in great ignorance of revelation, and the true worship of God, and will by that means be exposed to the artifice of the seducer, who lies in wait to deceive.

For this reason there is too much ground to apprehend that the spread of deism will, in a few ages, produce a large increase of popery among us; for confusion and ignorance of any kind, is a proper foundation for them to work upon.

The design of this work is to ground those who have embraced the protestant faith, against such as would raise scruples and prejudices in their minds against revelation, and without descending to particulars, we may assure ourselves, that whoever

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cavil against the scriptures, are strangers to them.

They object, and take upon themselves to judge in a matter in which they are not qualified to be judges; in a matter which they neither understand, nor in their present way of thinking, even intend to understand; for whatever shew they make of knowledge and wisdom, those men have never studied the scriptures; nor, generally speaking, have they learning or capacity to enter into their abstruse and deep parts.

Had they soberly and seriously studied the scriptures, they must of necessity have found so many, and such evident displays of the divine wisdom, power, and truth of God, as would have taught them to think more modestly of what is doubtful and obscure.

When do we hear of any name illustrious for learning and wisdom, who professed to have studied the scriptures, that ever disputed their divine origin and authority?

The famous *Selden*, one of the most eminent philosophers and most learned men of his time, who had taken a diligent survey of antiquity, and what knowledge was considerable among the Jews, Heathens and Christians, and read perhaps as much as any man ever read, towards the close of his life, declared to archbishop *Usher*, "That notwithstanding he had been so laborious in his "Enquiries, and curious in his collections, and had possessed himself of a treasure of books and manuscripts, upon all ancient subjects, yet he could rest his soul on none but the scriptures; and above all, that passage gave him the most satisfaction, *Titus*, ch. 2. from the 11th to the 14th ver. as comprizing the nature, end and reward of true religion."

Sir Chriſtopher Hatton, a great statesman, a little before his death, advised his relations to be serious in searching after the will of God; for, said he, "It is deservedly accounted "a piece of excellent knowledge, "to understand the law of the "land, and the customs of a man's "country. How much more to "know the statutes of Heaven, and "the law of eternity; those immutable and eternal laws of justice, and righteousness?------To "know the will and pleasure of the "only potentate, and universal "King!---*I have ſeen an end of all "perfection; but thy commandment "is exceeding broad.*

"Whatever other knowledge a "man may acquire, could he, by a "vast and imperious mind, and a "heart as large as the sand upon "the sea shore, command all the "knowledge of art and nature, of "words and things; and yet not "know the author of his being, "or the preserver of his life, his "sovereign and his judge, his secret refuge in trouble, his best "friend or worst enemy; the support of his life, and the hope of "his death, his future happiness, "and

" and his portion for ever; he doth " but go to hell with a great deal " of wisdom."

Mr. *Locke* also, (to mention no more) justly esteemed one of the greatest masters of reason, and a philosopher of the greatest freedom of thought, at the close of life, thus addressed an intimate friend, " Stu- " dy the holy scriptures, especially " the New Testament; therein are " contained the words of eternal " life. It hath God for its author, " salvation for its end, and truth " without any mixture of error for " its matter." *Posthumous works*, p. 344.

These, and several other men of the most eminent attainments in widom and knowledge, held the scriptures in the highest veneration and esteem, as a revelation from God, and by their excellent comments, have acknowledged their divine authority.

5th. We may rest assured that we have the strongest reason to be fully satisfied of the sufficiency of scripture, as perfectly able to make us wise unto salvation.

The Papist will own the scriptures to be the word of God, and a true rule of faith, but not a sufficient one; the only sufficient rule of faith he will tell you, is the church of *Rome*, which infallibly understands and propounds what the christian world is to believe and to do, in order to eternal salvation, and therefore you ought implicitly to submit your understanding and conscience to her direction and decisions, and doing so, it is needless to consult the scriptures, being already provided with a living infallible guide.

But if the scriptures are a true rule of faith, then are they a sufficient rule to all sorts and degrees of persons; for they expressly affirm their own sufficiency in this extensive sense.

6. That nothing but scripture is a sufficient ground to build our faith and practice upon, as christians, will clearly appear to any considerate unprejudiced person. All besides is uncertainty and confusion; there are popes against popes, councils against councils, fathers against fathers, the church of one age against the church of another; and tradition passing through hands so uncertain and inconsistent, must of necessity lose all force of evidence. Only upon the rock of scripture can we find any rest or solid comfort, and there have we a sure foundation, and an infallible guide, which we may with the greatest certainty and stedfastness oppose to the authority of the church of *Rome*.

Whatever may be pretended to gain that church the credit of a guide, all that and much more may be said for the scriptures. Doth the church of Rome boast antiquity? The scriptures are more antient. Is that church a means to keep Christians in unity? so are the scriptures to preserve unity in behalf of things necessary and plainly revealed, and in unity of charity in other matters.

Following

Following the scriptures we shall follow that which must be true, if the church of Rome be true, for she acknowledges the truth of scripture; whereas if we follow that church, we follow that which if the scripture be, may be false, nay, which if the scriptures be true, must be false; because the scriptures testify against it.

We have God's express command to follow the scripture, and no intimation or colour of any prohibition; but to believe in the church of Rome, we have no command at all, much less an express command; nay, on the contrary, we have a general prohibition in these words, *call no man master upon earth.*

Following the scriptures, we shall embrace a religion, which being contrary to flesh and blood, without any assistance from worldly power, wisdom, or policy; nay, against all the power and policy of the world, prevailed and spread itself in a short time over a very great part of the world.

Whereas it is apparent the church of Rome acquired, and still maintains her authority over men's consciences, by counterfeiting miracles, forging stories, corrupting the monuments of former times, by wars, persecutions, massacres, treasons, and rebellions; in short, by all manner of carnal, unjustifiable means, whether violent or fraudulent.

Following the scriptures, we shall believe a religion, the first preachers and professors whereof could certainly have no worldly end; could neither project, nor promise to themselves by it, any of the profits, honours, or pleasures of this world, but rather the contrary, even all the hardships the world could lay upon them.

On the other hand, the head of the church of Rome, the pretended vicar of Christ, successor of the Apostles, and guide of faith, it is palpably evident, makes the popish religion the instrument of his ambition, to gratify the lust of dominion, by subjecting the consciences of all mankind to his authority, and all nations to his jurisdiction.

Besides, it is evident to any man, who has the least discernment, that most of those doctrines, which the Romish church adds to the scriptures, are one way or other calculated to promote the honour or temporal profit of the teachers of them.

Following the scriptures only, we shall embrace a religion of perfect simplicity and purity; consisting in a manner, wholly in the worship of God, in spirit and truth, and in sincere obedience to his will. Whereas the Romish church and doctrine are loaded with weak, childish, ridiculous superstitions and ceremonies, and the most gross and manifest idolatry.

If we follow the scriptures, we cannot hope for salvation, without mortifying all vices, and practising all Christian virtues, which our reason tells us is the only way in which we can please the God of truth and holiness.

But the church of Rome opens an

easier and broader way to Heaven; and though a man continues during the course of his life in sin, gives him assurance he may be let into Heaven by a back gate, even by an act of attrition, or grief for sin, arising meerly from the fear of punishment, at the hour of death, if it be joined with the confession to a priest, or by an act of contrition without it.

Just and perfect are the precepts of piety and humility, of innocence and patience, of goodness, temperance, sobriety, justice, meekness, fortitude, and constancy, contempt of the world, the love of God, and of mankind; in a word, of all virtues and against all vices, which the scriptures enjoin us to observe and obey, and which, if they were generally obeyed, could not fail to make the world generally happy; and the goodness of them alone is sufficient to make any wise and good man believe, that the religion, which inculcates them, comes from God, the fountain of all goodness.

The church of *Rome* ever notes, and in a manner dissolves and abrogates many of the holy precepts of the Gospel, by teaching men that they are not laws for all christians, but counsels of perfection, and matters of supererogation, which a man should do well if he observes, but shall not sin if he does not observe them; that they are for those who aim at high places in heaven; but if a man will be content with an inferior station there, especially if he be content to taste of purgatory in the way, he need not incumber his thoughts at present with many of the rules of the gospel. Not to say that the *Romiſh* church manifestly foments a spirit of uncharitableness and cruelty to all mankind, who profess not her faith; therefore the religion of this church is far from being so holy or so good as the doctrine of Christ delivered in the scriptures, and consequently cannot come from the fountain of holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Following the church of *Rome* for our guide, we shall only follow a combination of deluded, or rather deluding men, who would close our eyes, and deny us the liberty of examining and considering whether the tenets they impose are right or wrong; for that papists have no liberty of judgment is manifest, because they deem it a mortal sin to doubt of any part of their doctrine; whence it follows, that seeing every man must resolve that he will never commit mortal sin, he must never examine the grounds of popery, lest he should be moved to doubt; or if he does examine, he must previously resolve, that no evidence, not even that of scripture, should move him to doubt, lest he should fall into a mortal sin.

As this is plainly the state and condition of the members of the *Romiſh* church, is is evident that they are unwilling and afraid to understand; that they have eyes to see, yet wilfully close them; that they have not the love of the truth, but are given up to strong delusions, and therefore,

therefore, that in following such a church and such guides, we shall only follow the blind, and with them fall into the ditch.

If we follow the scriptures, we shall follow only the truth; we shall follow a guide that exhorts us to keep our eyes always open to the truth, to try all things, to hold fast that which is good, to try every spirit, and to bring every doctrine to the test of God's pure and holy word; and thus we are at liberty to review the ground upon which we stand, to correct any error, and to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of the truth.

In these and several other respects, the sufficiency of scripture to guide us in the way of life and salvation is evidently seen, and how dangerous it is to forsake this heavenly guide, and follow the delusions of the church of *Rome*.

Lastly, Let us be much in reading the scriptures, for in them, and them only, have we *the words of eternal life*. As the soul of man is of an immortal nature, and made to be happy or miserable for ever, it highly concerns every individual of the human race, seriously to reflect on the important state, that waits the dissolution of the soul and body, which, once fixed, is irrevocable and irreversible, whether doomed to everlasting bliss or endless misery.

Now the christian religion, being founded on the revealed will of God, and consequently the only means sufficient to direct us in the way of everlasting life; it is necessary to render ourselves well acquainted with it; and amidst the many controversies which prevail in the world, to examine what doctrines are most agreeable to the pure and infallible word of God.

I cannot but recommend the study of the sacred scriptures at this time with peculiar zeal, as the emissaries of Rome are daily gaining proselytes, and drawing the unweary from the faith of the gospel.

The more the sacred writings are studied and canvassed, the brighter and more incontestable their evidence will appear; the more the Bible is consulted, the more shall we be confirmed in the faith of Christ's pure religion, and consequently be less liable to the seduction of those, who would impose upon our consciences the doctrines of men.

The two great contending parties are the Papist and the Protestant, and these mutually charge each other with false doctrines and damnable errors; we live in a land, and under a government, which permits free enquiry; the Bible is free of access, to that therefore let us apply, there let us examine into the merits of the cause, discover what is right and what is wrong, resolving to obey the truth wherever we find it.

We are not to continue in any profession, meerly because we were educated in it, but are to examine whether it be the same that was taught by Christ and his Apostles; we

we are to obey the command of our Saviour, bring all that we learn from teachers of any denomination to the touchstone of truth, and with the *Bereans*, recorded in *Acts* xvii. 11. to *ſearch the Scripture daily whether theſe things are ſo or no.*

Let us not therefore hazard our eternal salvation upon the uncertainty of groundless opinions, or implicitly assent to any tenets or principles that may be imposed by any man or body of men, unless upon a serious revisal, they appear to be founded on the word of God.

Nothing can make more against the authenticity of the church of Rome, than its forbidding the free use of the scriptures to its lay-members; for if their religion comes from God, as they pretend, if the scriptures are the word of God, as they acknowledge them to be, wherefore are they thus closed? If their doctrines and practices are agreeable to the word and will of God, why do they not bring them to the law and to the testimony, that so they may stand approved before the face of all men? The cause is evident, the reason is plain; their crafty teachers are conscious that many of their articles of faith and modes of practice are repugnant to the word of God, and for that reason they conceal that word, and make the very first article of their creed *the receiving for doctrines the commandments of men*, from whence all the rest naturally follow, all dependent on the first principle and root of error, the admitting of traditions and human constitutions, for the foundation of faith.

On the other hand, the religion of the protestants, or that which by way of distinction from the Romish, is called the *reformed* church, receives ample confirmation from its permitting not only the ecclesiastics, but the meanest and most illiterate of its members to read the Bible; nay, not only permitting, but enjoining the reading of it, both in public and private every day.

Such an open, such an ingenuous conduct, plainly shews, that the reformed church is not ashamed of the doctrine she professes, that she desires to gain converts, not through the blindness and ignorance of mankind, but through their knowledge and conviction of the truth, as founded upon the infallibility, not of man, (for that cannot be in the nature of things) but of God, one of whose peculiar attributes is truth, without any mixture of error.

If according to the tenor of scripture, it must be the grand object of the regard of all who would serve God acceptably, and surely it cannot be studied and consulted too much; consequently, the reading of it cannot be too warmly urged upon such as profess their belief in it.

Attend not therefore to the suggestions of any popish emissaries, who would insinuate that there are many different opinions of the learned concerning some parts of the Bible;

Bible; that it is so penned that few can understand it; and therefore, that the gifts of infallibility are vested in their church, as the grand directory of all its members.

We have already observed, and we desire to repeat it again and again, upon this occasion, when the enemy is coming in like a flood, that the blessed Jesus, the glorious Redeemer, the captain of our salvation, has enjoined all his followers to *call no man master upon earth.*

The only antidote against the growth of popery amongst us, is the Bible; that is the standard which must be lifted up against it, that furnishes the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation; with which arrayed, the sincere, though weak and even the illiterate Christian, shall be able to ward off the most powerful attacks of the enemy, and to come off conqueror, and more than conqueror.

In short, there is no other method of establishing our minds in the principles of our holy religion, than by frequently conversing with the word of God. Here we shall see the glory and excellency of the divine will; thus we shall feel the power of divine grace upon our hearts; thus our understandings will gradually be enlightened with divine knowledge, and to our unspeakable comfort we shall grow up into the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus, by delighting ourselves in the law of the Lord, and daily meditating therein.

Those who devote their time (that is, such parts of it as are consistent with their avocations in life) to the study of God's holy will, as plainly set forth in his blessed word, will be under the special blessing of Heaven, and like trees planted in a fruitful soil, shall grow and flourish, and rise infinitely higher than all the honours, wealth and enjoyments of this world; they shall rise to immortality, and there find all the glorious fruits of a life of faith and obedience, and the full accomplishment of the magnificent promise, which here on earth they with pleasure perused in the word of God.

The scriptures, in a word, contain every thing that is essentially necessary to be known for the happiness of man, both present and future. Happiness is greatly mistaken by the generality of mankind, both as to its nature and source; they vainly conceive it to be the gratification of sensual desires, and therefore erroneously place it in the acquisition of riches and honours; whereas it consists in refined and spiritual sensations, in an exemption from the predominance of animal and worldly affections, and can only be obtained by a comfortable assurance of an interest in the divine favour, which can alone confer present and future peace of mind, without which there can be no happiness.

Now the word of God plainly represents the state of man by nature, the penalty of the broken law of

God, his recovery by Jesus Christ, and the method of conveying grace here, and glory hereafter, in and through him. The word of God contains a perfect rule not only of faith, but likewise of practice, by following which we must be good men, good christians, and finally such as God would have us to be, which important end, that it may be answered by this sincere attempt to vindicate the authority, and enforce the study of the Holy Scriptures, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen*, and *Amen*.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since the Publication of this Edition, one of our Subſcribers, who ſeems to be a very ſerious Perſon, and earneſtly deſirous of acquiring Scripture Knowledge, has ſent us the following Queſtions.

WHAT Reaſon, or Reaſons can be aſſigned, why the *Jews*, from the Time of their Delivery from *Egyptian* Bondage, till they were carried into Captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, were every few Years falling into the groſſeſt Idolatry, although God was conſtantly working Miracles to convince them of his Power? And what Reaſon can be aſſigned why, after their return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, they had ſuch an Averſion to the Religion of the neighbouring Nations, that they chearfully ſubmitted to the cruelеſt Tortures, rather than defile themſelves with the Worſhip of Idols, even after Miracles had ceaſed?

The Queſtions are both of a very important Nature, and proper Anſwers to them will throw a conſiderable Light on the Scripture Hiſtory.

With Reſpect to the firſt, Why did the *Jews* ſo often plunge themſelves into the groſeſt Idolatry? &c.

The Reader muſt conſider that the *Jewiſh* State, was a Theocracy, under the immediate Inſpection of God, who gave them a Law for the Regulation of their Conduct, and who expected Obedience from them, in Gratitude for the many Favours which they had received at his Hands. It is a baſe invidious Aſſertion of *Voltaire's*, that the *Moſaic* Law did not teach the ſocial Duties, and nothing but the ſtrongeſt Prejudice againſt Divine Revelation could have led an Author of his Abilities into ſuch a Notion, eſpecially as he well knew that the youngeſt Child, who had read the Decalogue, was able to Confute him. The Precepts contained in the *Jewiſh* Law, are every Way conſiſtent with the Nature of the Divine Perfections, and ſuitable to the State of fallen Man. They poſitively enjoin the Adoration of one holy and true God, and they prohibit the Worſhip of Images, under any pretence whatever.

They order that every Perſon ſhall uſe the Name of God with Reverence, and pay a proper Regard to the Places and Times ſet apart for his Worſhip. Nor has God in that Law neglected to preſcribe ſuch Rules for the Conduct of his People as are conſiſtent with the very Being of Society. The Duties of Children to their Parents are inforced with a Promiſe of long Life and Proſperity.

Murder is prohibited, Chaſtity enjoined, Men are ordered both to abſtain from depriving their Neighbour of his Property, as alſo from giving a falſe Accuſation againſt him. But not ſatisfied with poſitive Duties, God's Law reaches to the inmoſt Receſſes of the Heart, and ſtrikes at the firſt Thoughts

Thoughts ariſing in the corrupt mind, namely, that of Covetouſneſs.

Such, with many more Particulars that might be added, was the Nature of that holy Law, which God delivered to the *Jews*, and which he inforced by ſuch Miracles, as were beyond the ordinary Courſe of Nature, ſo that the glorious Power of the Deity was in a Manner diſplayed before their Eyes.

But notwithſtanding all thoſe Miracles, and the continual Interpoſition of Jehovah in their Favour, yet they forſook the God of their Salvation, and went after the Worſhip of thoſe Nations, who had been driven from the Land of *Canaan* to make way for their Eſtabliſhment.

It muſt be remembered by every Perſon, who has read the Old Teſtament, that the *Jews* were above two hundred Years in a State of Servitude in *Egypt*, and even after the Temple was built at *Jeruſalem*, they had but one place of Worſhip, to which they came in great Crowds thrice every Year; but during the Intervals between thoſe Seaſons, not being able to read themſelves, nor having any Places to meet, where Perſons properly inſtructed might read the Law to them, they ſoon forgot its divine Precepts, and the Worſhip of the idolatrous Heathens, not laying any Reſtraint on their corrupt Inclinations, they kept not the covenant of God, and would not walk in his Law, they forgot what he had done, and the wonderful Works he had ſhewed them.

God had long borne with their Provocations, but as his Judgments however ſlow, are always ſure, he delivered them into the hands of the King of *Babylon*, who carried them beyond the River *Euphrates*, where they remained in Captivity ſeventy Years.

Affliction is the School of Wiſdom, and in that State, they were brought to a perfect Senſe of their Folly, being taught to revere their native Country, with the many Bleſſings they enjoyed in it, and the Worſhip of the true God, in Proportion to the Miſeries they ſuffered in their Captivity. When the *Jews* returned from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, their Government and Manners aſſumed a different Form. It is very probable, and has been the Opinion of ſome of the greateſt Writers, that thoſe Perſons, who preſided over them upon their return, ſuch as *Nehemiah*, *Zerobabel*, &c. had during the Time they were in *Babylon*, ſeen the Magi, who were a ſet of learned Heathen Prieſts, read on ſtated Times to their Diſciples, thoſe Books that contained the Subſtance of their Religion, which kept its firſt Principles fixed in their Memory, and by a conſtant Repetition, they became familiarly acquainted with its Precepts. But whatever was the Practice of thoſe *Babyloniſh* Magi, we are aſſured by *Joſephus*, *Philo*, *Judeus*, and all other *Jewiſh* Writers, that as ſoon as the Temple was rebuilt, their Leaders in order to preſerve the People from falling into Idolatry, eſtabliſhed what they called Synagogues, in every Public Place where the People met on the Sabbath, not to Sacrifice, for that could not be done any where, except in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*; but for this Purpoſe that a Perſon properly qualified might read a ſelect Part of the Law, when others, particularly the more aged, delivered an Explanation of it to the People.

Something of this Nature is ſtill practiſed in all the *Jewiſh* Synagogues, only that it is burdened with an innumerable Load of ridiculous Ceremonies. That Form uſed by them from their return from *Babylon*, till the Time of Chriſt's Appearance, was plain, ſimple and unaffected. It conſiſted in Prayers and Hymns to the Deity, and always concluded with an earneſt Petition, that God would ſend the Meſſiah to deliver them from the Power of their Enemies. Select Pieces of the Law were read, and the Duties injoined therein, illuſtrated, and inforced by the Examples of God's Judgments, while the Hope of Chriſt's coming was a powerful Motive to Obedience.

Theſe Exhortations, however, although the Senſ

of

of the Text remained pure, yet in Time they became very pernicious to the People, for the Rabbis reduced the Simplicity of the divine Word to a Syſtem, and by their falſe Gloſſes, perverted the Old Teſtament in the ſame Manner as the Papiſts have done the New.

For the Truth of this, we need only look to our Bleſſed Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, where he ſhews them how they perverted the Word of God; and in another Place, he ſays, ye have made the Word of God of none Effect, by your Traditions, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. That the *Jews* only about forty Years before they were carried Captive to Babylon, were in a Manner utterly ignorant of their own Law, appears from this, that a Copy of it being found in the Temple, in the Reign of *Joſiah*, they did not remember to have ever read it, and the pious King proclaimed a Faſt throughout all his Dominions, to beg pardon of God for their Neglect of ſearching into thoſe ſacred Oracles; inſtead of ſuffering them to lay by as uſeleſs.

On the other hand, without having Recourſe to any human Teſtimony, we are aſſured by the Words of all the four Evangeliſts, that when Chriſt came in the Fleſh, they were perfectly converſant with every Thing in the ſacred Books, and often diſputed with our Saviour, concerning difficult paſſages.

From what has been already ſaid, it naturally follows, that the Reaſon why the *Jews* relapſed ſo often into Idolatry, aroſe from an utter Inattention to the Precepts contained in their Law, which could not be acquired but by reading, and they being deſtitute of the Knowledge of Letters, and no Place appointed for ſelect Meetings, before their return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, they muſt of Conſequence have forgot its Precepts, and neglected its Duties.

The Religion of the neighbouring Nations was of too alluring a Nature, not to captivate the affections of Men, who were not properly ſettled in their Belief, and who had not judiciouſly conſidered the Nature and power of that God, who had done ſuch marvellous Things for them. The Law of a holy God, which they had neglected, required Purity in the Interior Parts; whereas the Religion of the Heathens promiſed them Happineſs in the Gratifications of their animal Paſſions. The Crimes forbidden by the Law of God, were conſidered as Virtues by the Heathens, and there is no Wonder, the People ran into them with the utmoſt Greedineſs. On the other Hand, when they had been trained in the School of Affliction, and returned to their native Land, they conſidered, that unleſs they could make the Knowledge of their Law public to every Individual, it would be impoſſible to preſerve themſelves from the ſame horrid Abominations they had been guilty of before.

To anſwer an End ſo ſalutary in its own Nature, and attended with ſo many beneficial Conſequences, Synagogues on the Plan already mentioned, were eſtabliſhed, not only in every City of *Judea*, but alſo in other Parts of the World, where the *Jews* reſided, for the Benefit of Commerce. But leſt our Readers ſhould be miſled, concerning any controverted Paſſages in the New Teſtament, relating to thoſe Societies, we ſhall here ſay ſomething concerning their Privileges. Every *Jew*, notwithſtanding their being guilty of the greateſt Crimes, were conſidered as the Children of *Abraham*, and had a Right to attend on the Temple Service, to them were committed the Oracles of God, the giving of the Law, and the Promiſes. Whether they were ſubjected to ſuffer pecuniary Fines, or cut off by a violent Death for the good of the Community, yet their Birthrights were not forfeited, nor were they diſinherited of thoſe Privileges, to which they conſidered themſelves intitled by Virtue of the *Sinai* Covenant. But the Regulations preſcribed for the good Government of the Synagogues, being entirely (ſee the Miſna) of human Invention, every *Jew* in the diſtrict was invited to attend, and he might either comply or refuſe. If he refuſed to accept of the In-

vitation, he was nevertheleſs conſidered as *Jew*, and except pecuniary Conſiderations, a Child of *Abraham*, and a Member of the Meſſiah's Kingdom. But if he became an attendant on the Reading and Expounding of the Law in the Synagogue, he was under an Obligation of complying with all the Rules preſcribed by thoſe who had firſt ordered the Eſtabliſhment of thoſe Societies. If he failed in Compliance with any ſingle Article, he was caſt out (ſee *John* ix.) or in other Words he was excluded from the Benefits of the Society, without being deprived of the Privilege of attending on the Sacrifices in the Temple, or an Inheritance of the Meſſiah's Kingdom.

Such was the Nature of thoſe Places, called Synagogues, in the New Teſtament, and ſuch were the Rules preſcribed for the Conduct of both *Jew* and *Proſelytes*, who attended them.

Two Propoſitions are now eſtabliſhed, which may ſtand as ſufficient Anſwers to the Queſtions propoſed by our Subſcriber, and we hope they will be of uſe to many of our Readers. Namely,

1ſt. That the *Jews*, before the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, fell into Idolatry, becauſe they were left unacquainted with the Purity of their Law; and,

2dly. That after their return from Captivity, they abhorred the Worſhip of the neighbouring Nations, becauſe they had *Moſes* and the Prophets read to them every Sabbath in the Synagogue. But we muſt not diſmiſs this important Subject, without deducing from it ſome practical Inferences.

The Papiſts have advanced an Axiom, which nothing leſs than the moſt conſummate Impudence could dictate, or the moſt indolent Stupidity ſwallow, namely, *That Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion.* It is poſſible that many of our Readers may be ſtartled at ſuch an Aſſertion, eſpecially after they have read the Word of God, which condemns People for Ignorance, who have an Opportunity of Improvement. But we can ſolemnly aſſure them that it is true (ſee *Cruzas Collectionis Cannonis; Confeſſio Tridenti,* and many other popiſh Authors.)

Nor would it ever have been controverted, had not divine Providence been pleaſed by the Art of Printing to diſpel the Miſt of Darkneſs from the Minds of Men, and laid the divine Oracles open for their Inſpection. The Knowledge of Chriſtianity is partly kept up by the reading of the Word of God in Public Aſſemblies, and a Reſpect for its Duties is preſerved by the ſtated Exhortations of thoſe Paſtors, who are authoriſed to draw practical Inferences from every ſpeculative Propoſition. But even Public Inſtructions, in the Places ſet apart for the worſhip of God, would never have conduced to propogate Chriſtian Knowledge in the Manner it is now univerſally diffuſed, had not Books been publiſhed containing the Sum and Subſtance of Chriſtian Doctrine, with the Purity of its Morals, adapted to the meaneſt Capacities, and the price reduced ſo low, as to enable the pooreſt Perſon to purchaſe them.

The Seals of the Book of God are now opened, no Reſtraint is laid on our Purſuit after Knowledge, but he that runneth, may read; nor can fools err, unleſs they are wilfully deceived.

The Apoſtle *Paul* was ſenſible of the Neceſſity of Knowledge in order to regulate Practice, when he ſays, "How ſhall they believe in him of "whom they have not heard? and how ſhall "they hear without a Preacher?"

Indeed it would be both impious as well as impoſſible; for none ought to be the Object of our Prayers, but he in whom we can place both Truſt and Confidence. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Were the reading of the Holy Scriptures prohibited in our Churches, and Printing aboliſhed, Mankind would ſoon become as ignorant, and conſequently as barbarous as they were a thouſand Years ago, when it was conſidered as a Diſhonour for any Perſon to ſtudy Literature, unleſs he was an Eccleſiaſtic.

We

We ſhall conclude this with our earneſt Wiſh, that true Knowledge may diffuſe itſelf amongſt all Ranks of Beings, and extend to the remoteſt Parts of the Univerſe. That God may give his bleſſed Son the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion. That the Knowledge of God may cover the Earth as the Waters do the Sea. That all Nations may become the Kingdoms of our Lord and his Chriſt. Then ſhall Juſtice run down our Streets like Water, and Righteouſneſs like a mighty Stream. Men ſhall be bleſſed in the Redeemer, and all Nations ſhall call him Bleſſed. The Paſſions of Men being ſubdued by a Conviction of the Truth, the Kingdom of Chriſt on Earth ſhall be advanced, and ſuch a perfect Renovation take Place, as will reſtore us to the Favour of our Maker, and be made in all Things conformable to the Glory of that Image, which our firſt Parents loſt by Diſobedience.

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